CRASH

ZX SPECTRUM

A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION

NO.55 AUGUST 1988

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THE GREAT GIANA SISTERS
Punk sisters from Rainbow Arts

ROADBLASTERS
US Gold in the fast lane

VIRUS
Firebird get infected

ALTERNATIVE WORLD GAMES
The other Olympics

MARAUDER
Another hit from Hewson

SEX AND VIOLENCE!!
What are your views?

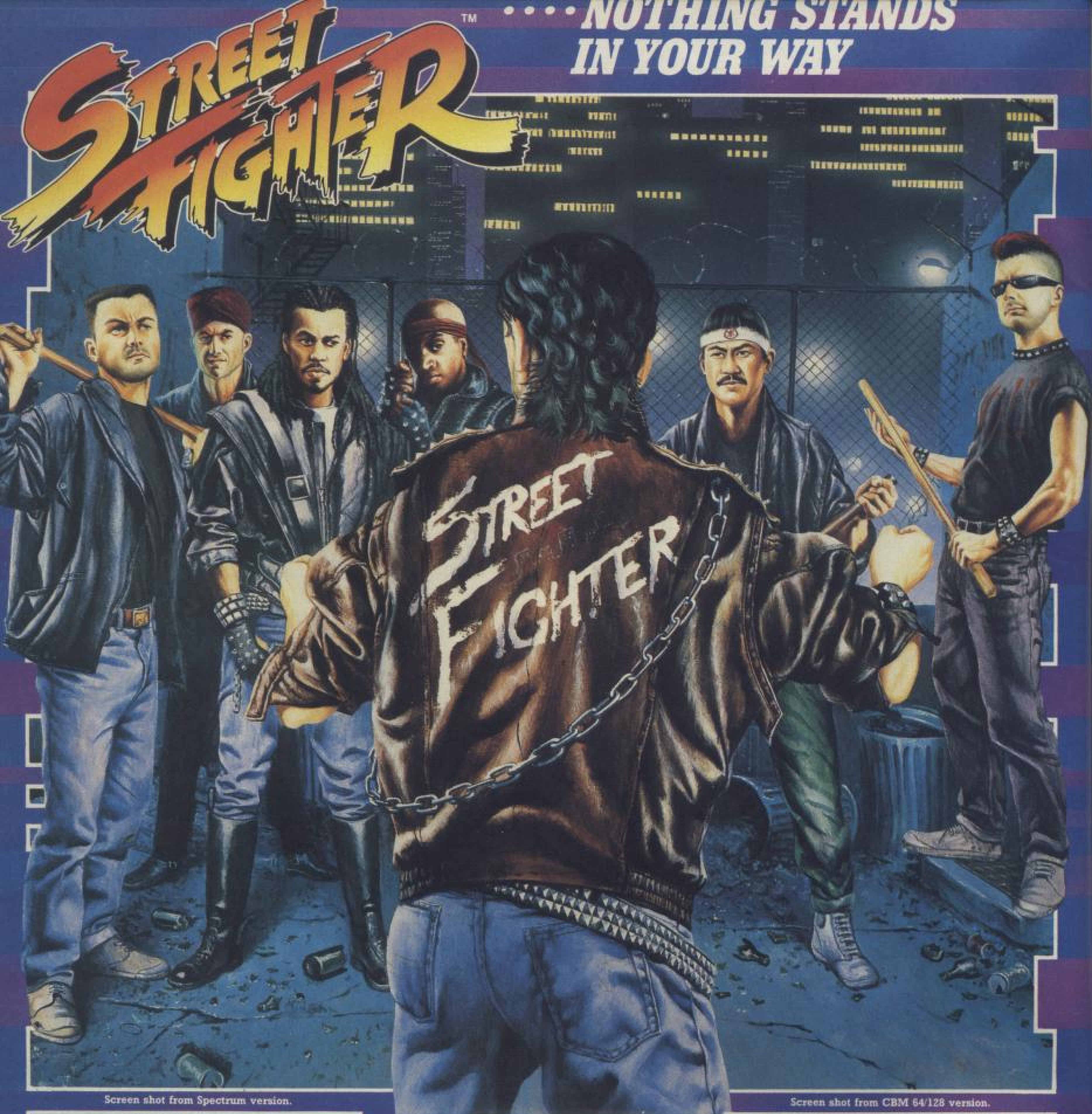
WIN WIN WIN!
A DAY OUT WITH DARTH VADER from DOMARK
A PC ENGINE from Rainbow Arts
A CD MIDI HI-FI
FIFTY TICKETS FOR ALTON TOWERS thanks to GREMLIN GRAPHICS

SPECTRUM
MONTHLY SPECTRUM SOFTWARE REVIEW

ADVENTURE TRAIL EXTRA!!

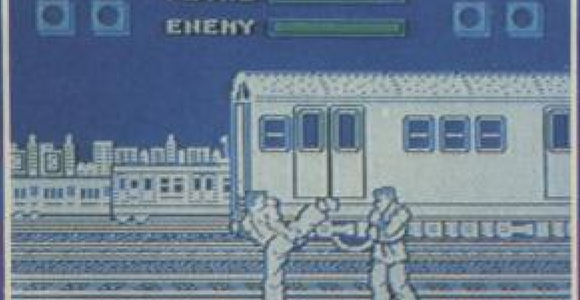

IMAGIN
ADVANCEMENT TH
Denied his throne, RASTAN hacks his way through the horrors unleashed upon his world – FIRE BREATHING LIONS, GIANT BATS, SNAKES, LIVING SKELETONS and the LEGIONS OF THE DAMNED. Finally he must slay the EVIL NECROMANCER KARG, as he assumes the awesome appearance of a MULTI-HEADED DRAGON, to regain what is rightfully his. Is it more than you can handle?...
RASTAN THE WARRIOR KING.
"SLICK AND COMPELLING" Crash
"RASTAN SAGA IS GOOD ENTERTAINING STUFF AND IT'LL KEEP HARDENED ARCADE FIENDS GOING FOR A LONG TIME" Commodore User.
RASTAN
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SPECTRUM
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NETICS
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your way through
the precinct – the back alleys, the car
parks. Fight your way through
VILLAINOUS community, the
SKINHEADS, the BEASTIE BOYS, the
BOUNCERS. On a hot steamy night in
New York this is just the tip of the iceberg
on your CHILLING QUEST to confront
"MR. BIG."
"THE GRAPHICS ARE OUTSTANDING
AND WOULDN'T LOOK OUT OF PLACE
IN A CARTOON FILM" Zzap 64
"IT'S PACKED WITH FIVE
LEVELS OF PURE
ADDICTIVENESS; YOU
CAN'T GO WRONG"
Crash.
ARKANOID
type Space Fighter
MIXTEC runs through long forgotten
computer data until it finds the answer
to this threat... "VAUS 2" is launched and
speeds towards the threatening alien
presence, before it can extract it's
revenge... "THE REVENGE OF DOH."
"A GREAT GAME, FUN AND
FRUSTRATINGLY ADDICTIVE"
Sinclair User.
"COMBINE GORGEOUS VISUAL
PRESENTATION WITH
POWERFUL WEAPON
ENHANCEMENTS AND
ADDICTIVE GAME PLAY AND
YOU HAVE REVENGE OF DOH"
Zzap 64.
"GO AND BUY IT
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Your Sinclair.
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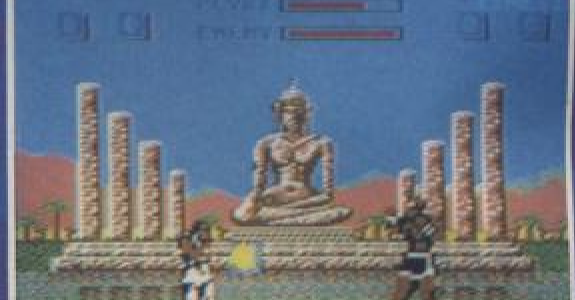


....NOTHING STANDS IN YOUR WAY

Screen shot from Spectrum version.



Screen shot from CBM 64/128 version.



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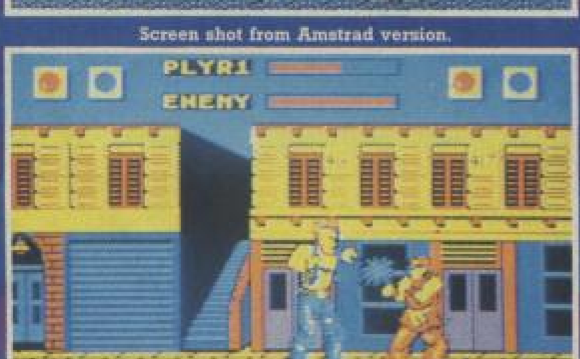
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Screen shot from Amstrad version.



Screen shot from Atari ST version.



CRASH ZX SPECTRUM CONTENTS

ADVENTURERS! PREPARE YOURSELF WITH THE ADVENTURE TRAIL EXTRA

Go FORWARD and LOOK at the best thing an adventurer could ASK for. EXAMINE the pages of Samara's Adventure Trail Extra and you will FIND an exclusive interview with the masters of the microchip, Magnetic Scrolls. Plus a LOOK at the top adventures coming your way and a multitude of reviews and hints on the latest games. It all starts on page 51!

CENSORSHIP AND 16-BIT!

Everyone has their own ideas about censorship in the software industry. In this month's Split Screen we take a look at both points of view. It's not just Martech who have created a hiatus, others are also at fault. On what side of the censorship fence do you fall?
Find out on page 92

So which is the best, the Atari ST or the Commodore Amiga? Should you splash out £400 on one of these 16-bit 'wonder computers', or are they all just sound and graphics? We compare both machines and find out if the software is up to the machines' high specification.
Find out on page 70

DO IT YOURSELF



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REGULARS


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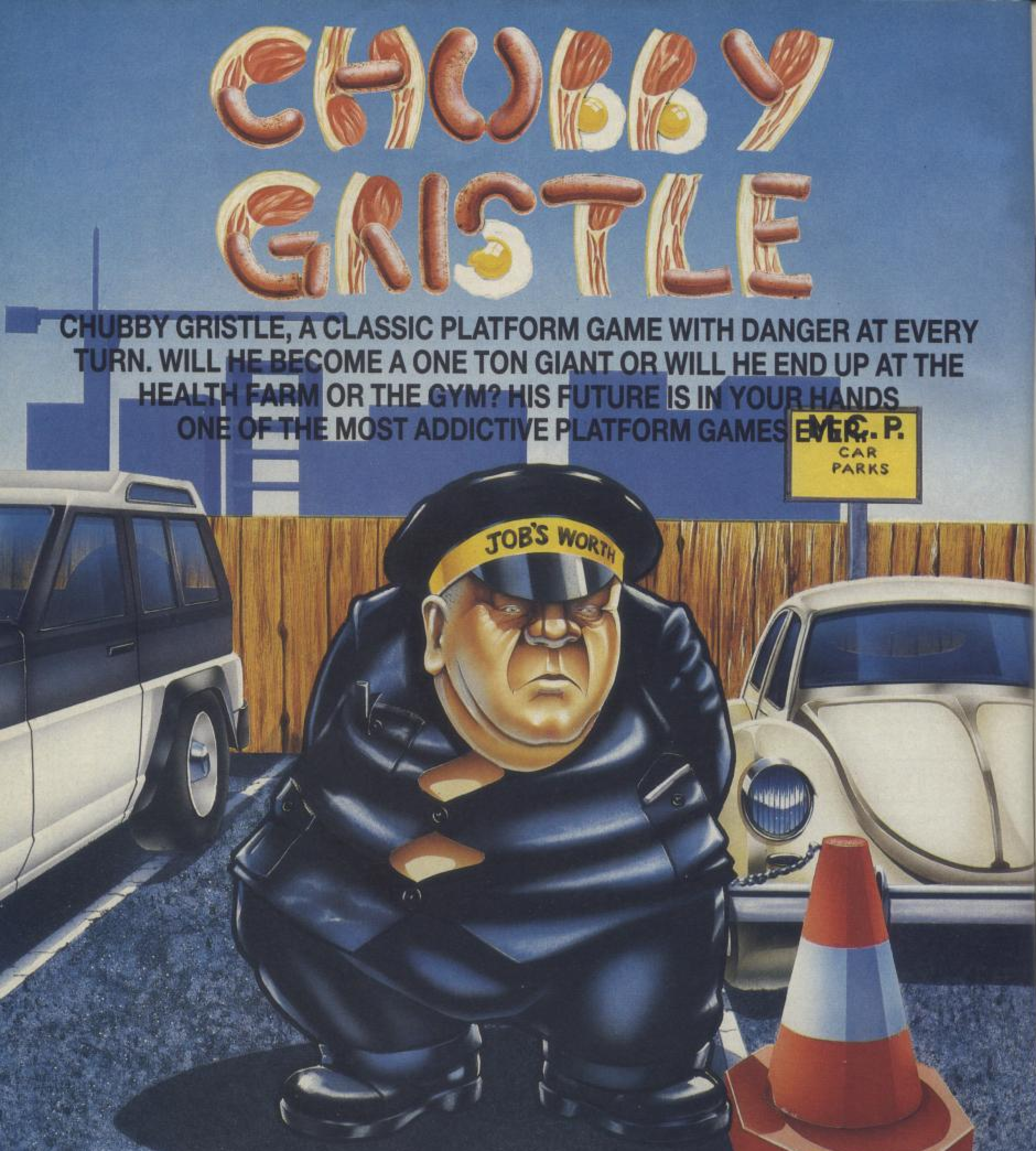

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ISSUE 56
ON SALE
AUGUST 25

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CRASH

ZX SPECTRUM

BUSINESS AS USUAL

'What's this?', I hear you cry, 'No new faces?'. Nope, I'm afraid not. In fact things are getting very normal here at CRASH Towers. Well, they were until Dave Baxter from GO! rang up with news of the latest Rainbow Arts release. We just had to squeeze a review in, you just wouldn't believe the trouble we went to. It all started when . . . no, I think I'll save that story for some other time. Perhaps Christmas, when we'll have literally hundreds of pages to fill!

So what's happening? Well, this month we've got a great Adventure Trail Extra – Samara's been through three quills in a week! And what about the Adventure Trail Extra cover? Goes nicely with the Split Screen feature, don't you think? No doubt, censorship – the subject of discussion this month – will create a few postal worries for Lloyd's pigeon holes, and that's not a bad thing. (After all, he is going on holiday this month!) If Split Screen doesn't get your back up then take a look at the feature on the Amiga and ST – it exposes the *real* facts about these so-called mega-computers.

Don't forget about the National Computer Games Championships. By the time you read this all the qualifying heats wiil be over. The semi-finals take place at Manchester Airport on August 16 and at Waterloo Station on August 18. So, if you can find time between lazing in the sun (huh, some joke that is!) and watching Neighbours – well, that's all Nick Roberts ever does – why not come along and join us? It'll be a scream!

Finally, if there's anyone out there that fancies handling mounds of technical queries and reviews, please drop me a line. Tell me all about yourself and what sort of technical hardware and software knowledge you have.

Next month sees the last of Simon Goodwin's regular columns for CRASH – 'I just can't cope!'. Although, he'll still be writing the odd technical feature, on things like the new Sinclair Professional PC (turn the page for more on that).

So what are waiting you for? Start reading.

Dominic Handy

NEXT MONTH IN

CRASH

ZX SPECTRUM

FREE! FREE! FREE!
PC SHOW SUPPLEMENT

The definitive guide to everything happening at the Earl's Court PC Show 88. You'll need nothing else but this comprehensive run down on the computer gamer's most popular exhibition. Everyone who matters will be there. Make sure you're prepared!

- *FANZINE FILE* With exams out of the way, it's back to the grind
- *MONITOR* The spotlight falls on Killer Computers
- *COMPACT DISCS* We've the latest portable players to give way
- *SCHOOL'S OUT* How computers are making schools redundant
- *PLUS ALL YOUR FAVOURITE REGULARS*

It's all in Issue 56 of CRASH – your Spectrum would be lonely without it

ON SALE AUGUST 25

REVIEWS

Amazing AUGUST accomplishments

SMASHED!

HOT SHOTS
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ADVERTISERS INDEX

NEWS

NEW JOYSTICK RANGE

BACK IN CHRISTMAS 1987 **PowerPlay** launched the terribly successful Cruiser Original – complete with red ergonomic shaft, blue casing and white buttons. (In fact we've had a few in the CRASH office for ages, and none them have conked out!) But now, for the trendier games player, there's two new sticks. Both of them still feature the innovative sensitivity setting (just lift the shaft and turn for sensitive, normal or firm play – saves many a sore wrist). Cruiser Black has a flat top shaft, as opposed to the rounded Original, and a set of ultra-tough microswitches that should last for ages and ages. It, like the tough Original, is priced at a very competitive £9.99.

And if those two still don't suit your needs, there's also a Clear version, so you can see exactly what's going on inside the robust plastic casing. The Cruiser Clear also has a special bit of wizzo hi-tech gadgetry which autofires when either of the two buttons are held down. The Cruiser Clear is worth an extra three pounds, at £12.99. Nick Roberts tells us, it's improved his street-cred no end! All three Cruisers are available from **PowerPlay, *Unit 2, Rothersthorpe Avenue Trading Estate, Northampton NW4 9JH.***



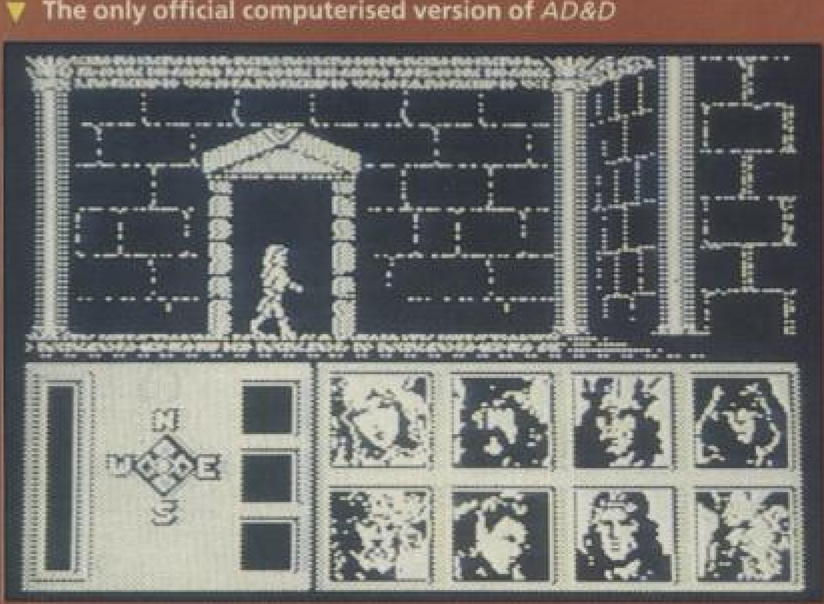
FIRE-BREATHING FANTASY

ADVANCED DUNGEONS and Dragons are leaping the commercial chasm into computer games. Under license from **TSR**, **Strategic Simulations Inc.** are to release several games based on AD&D game modules. Drawing on the Dragonlance and the even newer Forgotten Realms, fantasy settings, the games will combine the traditional TSR role-playing rules with arcade action. There's even the possibility that SSI may be able to design a completely new module for the as yet relatively undeveloped Forgotten Realms world.

The demands of this sort of complexity are high and some of the games, including a Dungeon Master Assist program, won't be available for the Spectrum. *Heroes Of The Lance*, however, will. Derived from the first Dragonlance module, Dragons of Despair, the episode charges you with the task of recovering the precious Disks of Mishakal which are hidden deep within the treacherous ruins of the temple Xak Tsaroth and guarded by the ancient black dragon, Khisanth. You control eight companions, whose different attributes and skills must be exploited to counter the powerful magic that defends the temple, defeat gigantic spiders and parry with the skeletal undead.

Possible cross-promotions may include discount offers on the glossy TSR books which accompany the modules. The first SSI *AD&D* releases should be available by the end of this year.

▼ **The only official computerised version of *AD&D***



VINYL IS A GIRL'S BEST FRIEND

DESTINY'S IMMINENT release, a shoot-'em-up entitled *Diamond*, comes complete with an unusual freebie: an audio cassette featuring a single by the newly emerging group called **The Company She Keeps**. The cassette features two tracks – *What A Girl Wants* and *Express Interest*. In future certain singles release by the newly formed Destiny Records, are to be packaged along with the company's games in a similar way. Francis Lee of Destiny commented that 'this will give the less well-known groups their big breaks'. Any pop groups interested in appearing on the B-side of a Destiny's games should contact Francis at Destiny.

▼ **Hip to the beat when you buy Destiny's *Diamond***



BYTE THE BIG APPLE

THE BIG APPLE ENTERTAINMENT COMPANY has announced its arrival in a blur of all-American hype and razzamatazz. Set up with the backing of **Prestwich Holdings**, the company plans to release at least four full-price titles and twenty budget titles (on two separate labels) before the end of this year. First on the menu is *Oops!*, a 'deceptively simple' strategy game which has you scooting around the space-time continuum collecting vital gravity pods. Shortly to be followed by *Delphian* and *Neutron*, it should be available for the Spectrum soon.

Not that The Big Apple are going to confine their activities to publishing software: they've also organised a frequent-buyers club, christened, in appropriately streetwise fashion, **The Bronx Club**. Leader of this trendy gang is cool dude Bronx Billy who greets all participants with the cheery catch phrase 'Have a nice play'. Members will be able to collect apple tokens on their special leaflets. Once you've collected enough, you'll be able to exchange them for a wide range of gifts including records, tapes and T-shirts. Games buyers who send a stamped addressed envelope to Big Apple will receive a free membership pack, including membership card and a collecting leaflet.

NEW LOOK FOR CODE MASTERS

STREETWISE budget software producers Code Masters seem to be in a slight bit of trouble over using the picture of Jesse Owens on the front of *The Race Against Time* (79%, Issue 54) packaging. And, 'as a result of a misunderstanding', all future packs will be adorned with the glorious picture of athlete Carl Lewis. Why anyone should object to this non-profit-making game is beyond us! After all, every penny of profit goes to Sport Aid 88, a very worthy charity.



NEWS

AMSTRAD IN 16-BIT LAUNCH

AFTER MONTHS of speculation and rumour, CRASH can safely say that Amstrad are producing a 16-bit computer, although not a Spectrum. The new machine, at the moment called the Sinclair Professional PC, is expected to be launched at the PC Show in mid-September as a £299 package. It is expected to be a direct rival to Commodore's Amiga and Atari's ST.

At £299 it would seem very unlikely that Amstrad are to include a monitor but would, like Atari, allow a great room for expansion. Amstrad have already commissioned software for bundling with the release – GO! are duplicating 100000 copies of a four game compilation, consisting of *Bedlam, Wizard Warz, Trantor – The Last Stormtrooper* and *Pitstop II*. This suggests Amstrad are aiming directly at the entertainment sector. News that the Sinclair Professional PC will have a 3½" disk drive (apparently the contract is for 10000 drives month) fuels speculation that the machine could easily be moved into the business sector at a later stage – although, Amstrad rarely produce two model ranges for one niche; the PC1512s and PC1640s already fill the mid-range (business AND entertainment) area of computing.

As the name suggests the new machine will be at least partly PC-compatible, thus also competing with the recently price-cut Commodore PC1. The tougher 3½" drive seems to be the way forward for Amstrad, after their go-it-alone policy with the 3" disk proved too expensive for software producers. The Spectrum+ and all, bar the PC-compatible, Amstrads use the 3" standard. However, their last release, the portable PPC640, used the 3½ disk for the first time.

To get rid of old 3" disk stock it seems like Amstrad will be putting together a large (50-100 games) compilation to bundle with the + at christmas.

As with all of their releases Amstrad are silently optimistic. We can but wait and see.



▲ Alan Sugar: watching the rest to produce the best

THE NATIONAL COMPUTER GAMES CHAMPIONSHIPS PROGRESS REPORT

The National Computer Games Championship is sponsored by US Gold in association with the National Association of Boys Clubs and the Personal Computer Show and organised by Newsfield Limited, publishers of CRASH, ZZAP!64 and THE GAMES MACHINE. We gratefully acknowledge the kind assistance of British Rail, the British Airports Authority, Dixons for supplying the Spectrum +3s and monitors, Commodore (UK) for supplying the Commodore 128s and monitors, and Konix for the joysticks. And thanks to the staff and members of the local Boys Clubs for all their help and patience!

As 15 Spectrum qualifiers, from Scotland, Wales/South West and The Midlands heats, already held, sit back and relax their wrists, ready to renew battle on August 16 and 18 more contestants bash away on their favourite games in anticipation of the London/South East and The North heats. In the meantime we take a look at the action and results of the heats already held.

First, then, we travel to that silvery-grey city, often referred to as 'the Athens of the North', in the company of Mark 'da Vinci' Caswell.

EDINBURGH

Saturday June 11

The start of the National Computer Games Championship began in earnest at the first venue, Fet Lore Boys Club in Edinburgh.

Each of the contestants was given ten minutes practice to improve on their finely-honed skills, before the competition began. The game at this Scottish qualifying heat was US Gold's *720°*, the rules of battle were simple: one game only with ten minutes in which to play. No second chance.

Spectrum gamesters began, skateboards moving at breath-taking speeds and some truly incredible, near fatal, stunts were performed to get those vital points.

The pace hotted up as **Stephen Smithwhite** took up the challenge and promptly set the score to beat of over 138000. Could it be beaten? The answer looked like 'yes' as **Stuart Campbell** and **Brian Wardlaw** took up the challenge, the battle raging on between both players as they passed the 100000 mark with moderate ease. But sadly for them both, Stephen's score proved too high to reach, the last few grains of sand in the digital hourglass ran out, leaving Stuart on just under 110000 and Brian close behind with over 103000. Formidable scores nevertheless.

We congratulated the winners and other semi-finalists, and commiserated with the losers. In the end, though, all went away with prizes for their valiant service.

Spectrum qualifiers for the semi-finals to be held in Manchester

Stephen Smithwhite (winner)	138660
Stuart Campbell	109310
Brian Wardlaw	103250
Mark Smithwhite	84270
William Bann	53500

NAILSWORTH

Saturday June 18

A week later, and the action moved south (Nailsworth Boys Club in Gloucestershire, to be exact), the adjudication this time in the competent hands of Dominic Handy.

All the way from Swansea came **Michael Deer**, a timid fellow in construction, who placed his gifted frame in front of the Spectrum +3. Others had six or seven practice games, but he needed only one (which he didn't even finish). As the ten-minute battle commenced, the two contestants aside young Deer fell by the wayside but Michael continued to the end, clocking up a magnificent 232480 points, compared to the 30000 of his fellow contestants.

It was not over, though. Up stepped a very confident looking **Mark Sevill** from Newent, scoring 230740; not bad for a virgin fighter. You either had the knack or you didn't, these two guys certainly did – no others came close.

Spectrum qualifiers for the semi-finals to be held in London

Michael Deer (winner)	232480
Mark Sevill	230740
Philip White	168410
Justin Pearson	157210
Paul Burridge	152300

BIRMINGHAM

Saturday July 2

Just a fortnight on, at the Highgate Sport & Leisure complex in Birmingham, the third set of qualifying heats got underway. This time it was Nick Roberts's chance to show how you can adjudicate with a stopwatch in one hand and a pizza in the other . . .

Yet again, they came from far and wide, with Leicester providing a mound of talent. This time, to the delight of the competitors, the US Gold entourage unveiled the recently Smashed game *Bionic Commando*. They all seemed to like the practise games, and confidence was running high. But the real thing is a completely different matter.

As expected the scores were close, but no one was prepared for the nail-biting contest which developed. Up stepped **Simon Hadlington** from Stourbridge who proceeded to shoot and swing his way to a very credible 34300. Pretty good, but **Gavin Cavendish** from Groby in Leicester gave Simon the fright of his life with a score of 34280.

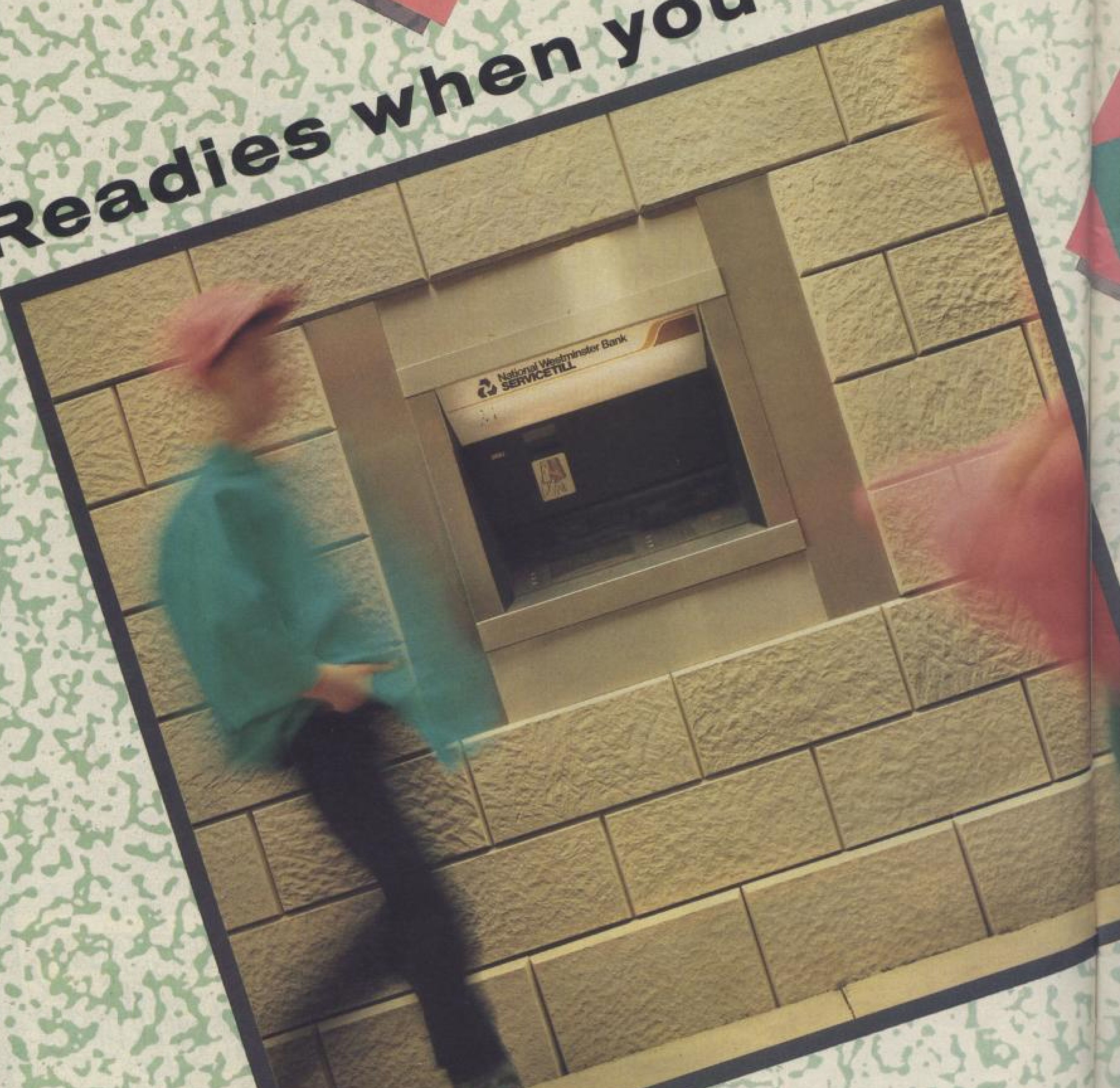
Just as everyone thought the contest was over a very smug (he'd just come second in the Commodore section) **Paul Mellerick** from Leicester stepped up. With Konix joystick in one hand and bionic arm in the other he notched up an amazing 35990! Phew, enough to make Nick drop his pizza!

Spectrum qualifiers for the semi-finals to be held in London

Paul Mellerick (winner)	35990
Simon Hadlington	34300
Gavin Cavendish	34280
Adrian Grubb	27240
Trevor Mullen	12010



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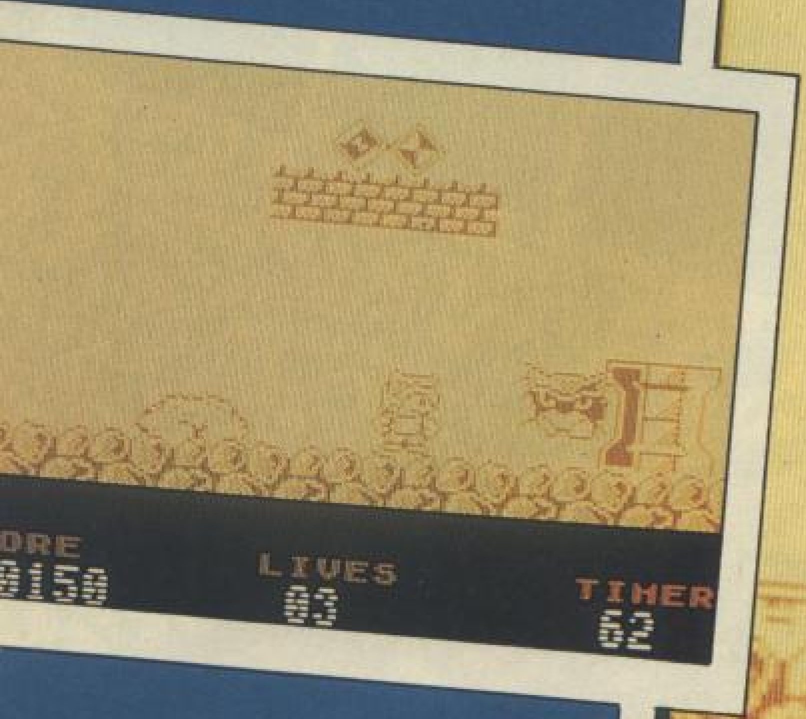
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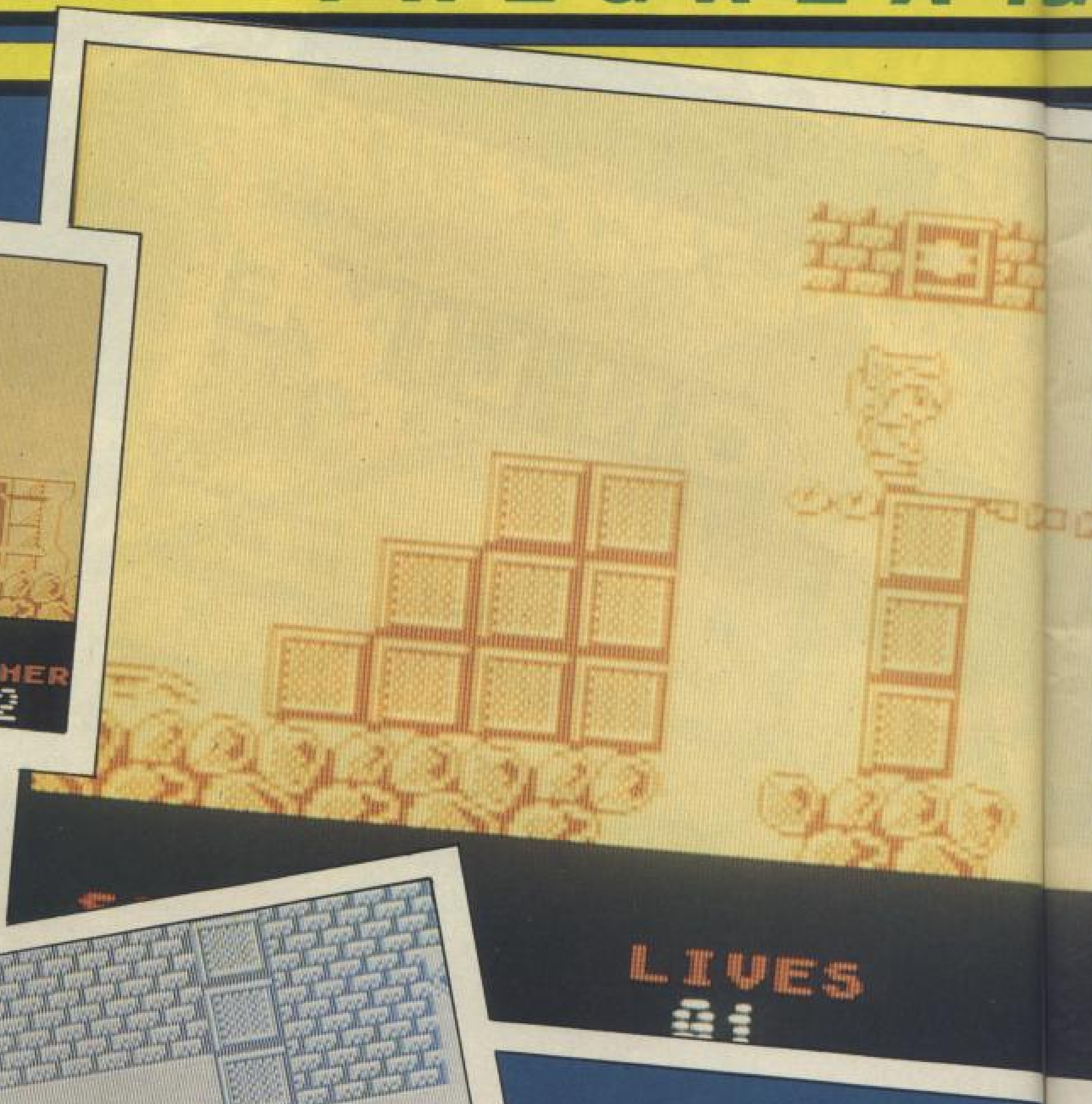
NatWest The Action Bank

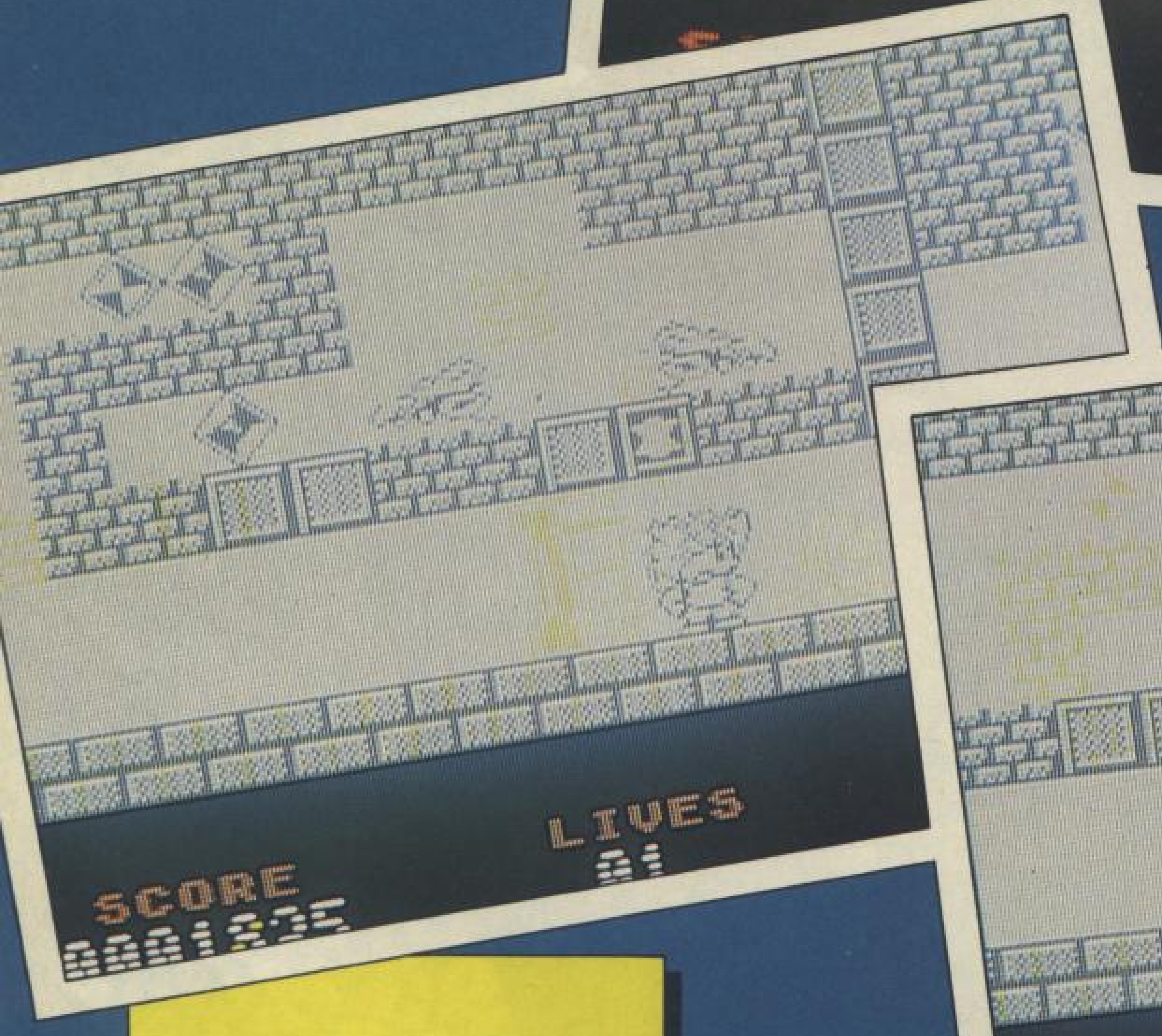
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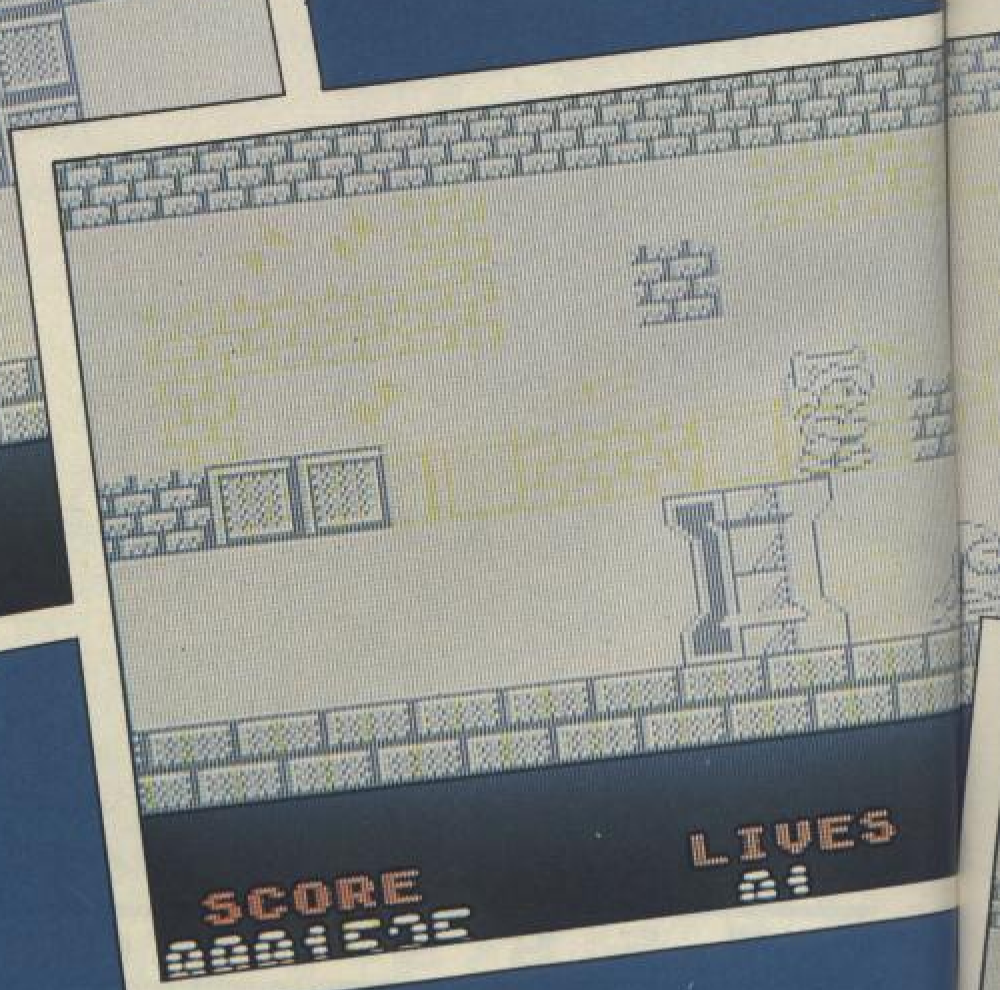
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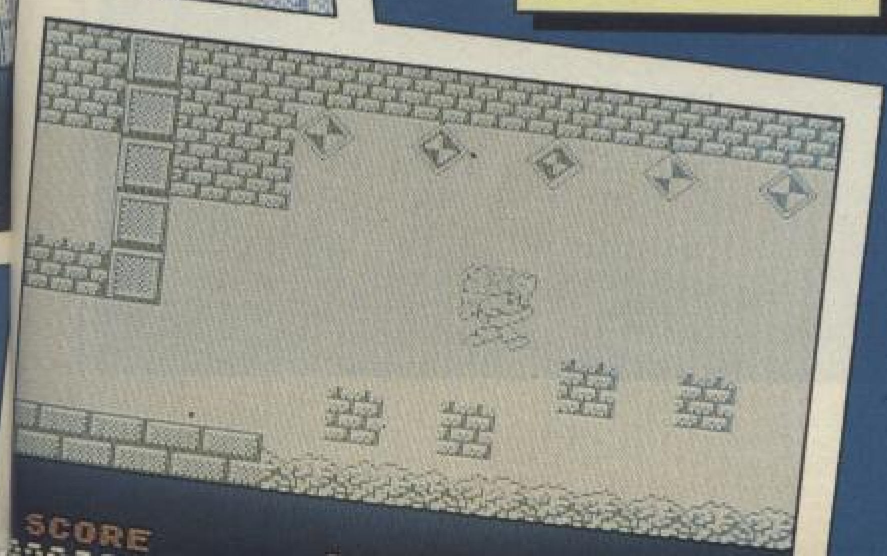


Producer: **Rainbow Arts**
Retail price: **£8.99 cassette, £12.99 disk**
Authors: **Source Software**

G·I·A·N·A S·I·S·T·E·R·S







Sleeping safely in her bed one night, petite Giana from Milano has a strange, macabre dream. In her nightmare, she enters a weird land, full of strange aliens and terrible traps.

Her only chance of escaping this dreamland is to explore its 32 levels in search of a magic diamond. The adventure takes place above or below ground and contains many platforms and obstacles. Giana has a time limit of 100 seconds in which to complete each horizontally scrolling landscape; failure to do so results in the loss of one of three lives.

While jumping and running over the platforms, Giana must avoid lethal contact with the many aliens which look suspiciously like a host of cute and cuddly creatures. They include the squirming worms (cute?), scuttling lobsters and giant bees. These can be squashed by jumping on them from above, or shot using dreambubbles or an all-destroying smart bomb.

Magic crystals can be obtained by head-butting or hitting blocks with a star on them; when 100 have been collected, Giana is rewarded with an extra life. Extra weapons and features can also be gained from blocks to make progress easier. These include three types of dreambubble: lightning bolts, rebounding double lightning bolts and strawberries which home in on the aliens. Extra features include magic bombs, a clock which sends aliens to sleep for a while, a lollipop (yielding an extra life) and a water drop to protect Giana against fire.

Traps in the landscape include lethal spikes, fire pits and pools of water. There are also holes, of which some are deadly, while others lead to secret crystal-filled rooms – only trial and error determines which are which.

A status strip above the main play area displays the number of crystals collected, lives remaining and time left. If Giana completes a level within the time limit, she earns a bonus: the number of seconds left multiplied by ten.

Only if poor little Giana manages to escape through the 32 levels carrying the magical diamond, can she return to her normal, peaceful world in old Milano. If two players wish to take part, they take turns to play; the second player controls Giana's sister Maria.

" The Great Giana Sisters **lacks the colour of the Commodore 64 version, but makes up for it with nicely shaded, well-drawn characters. The horizontal scrolling is smooth, although a trifle slow at times. Little Giana is ever so cutely animated as she runs and jumps through the various levels, head-butting the blocks and squashing the animals. When she collects the magic wheel, she even gets an electric shock which makes her hair stand on end! There is some great sound on the 128K with a catchy tune and atmospheric sound effects.**

Playability ranks highly, especially with the many extra weapons and features to help make progress easier. It's this variety which makes Giana's adventure so addictive. Giana Sisters **is a neat variation on the classic** Super Mario Bros **theme and should be popular with all arcade fans. Go out and buy it. "**

PHIL **91%**

" As Giana and Maria from Milano head-butt their way through their fairytale adventure, they encounter an incredible series of weird and wonderful creatures. Though monochromatic, the lobsters, turtles and scuttling spiders are detailed and create an infectiously light-hearted cartoon atmosphere. Each level boasts a bewildering array of walls, caverns, chasms, towers, crevasses and canyons, punctured by a seemingly endless series of hidden treasure and rooms. There's always something new to discover even if you've been playing the game for days and days. The controls are smooth and the animation of Giana, particularly when her cute-little-girl haircut turns into a full-blown punk afro affair, is practically perfect. Comparisons with Super Mario Bros **are inevitable. Obviously** The Great Giana Sisters **can't emulate the superior graphics and sound of the arcade machine but, in terms of gameplay (which is the most important thing after all), those** Super Mario Bros **have certainly met their match. "**

KATI **91%**

" The Great Giana Sisters **is another one of those 'bang your head on the brick' games. You know the type – like** Super Mario Bros. **The graphics are cute and cuddly with the little sisters excellently animated, but perhaps just a mite too slow. The monsters and other sprites are also well drawn and to kill them you have to manoeuvre your sister so that she drops down and squashes the aliens flat. As for the colours: well, the monochrome looks like it's been produced randomly and it comes up with some rather garish combinations (magenta paper and cyan ink!) but this doesn't spoil the action. Each level holds more surprises and the graphics get better all the time. Despite the drawback in terms of speed, the game is immensely playable; I couldn't put the joystick down for ages. An essential purchase for all Spectrum arcade gamesters. "**

NICK **93%**

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: monochromatic, cartoon-like characters distinguished by plenty of detail
Sound: catchy tunes and spot effects
Options: two-player option
General rating: highly addictive and great fun to play. Plenty of hidden passages and surprise features should keep you hooked for weeks

Presentation	89%
Graphics	79%
Playability	93%
Addictive qualities	92%
OVERALL	**92%**

VIRUS

Producer: **Firebird**
Retail price: **£7.95**
Author: **Steven Dunn from a concept by David Braben**

The country has been invaded by waves of hostile alien spaceships. Instead of attacking military installations, they are intent on polluting the landscape with a red virus. This kills off all plant and animal life, including humans.

Determined to counter this devastating threat, a brave pilot is strapping himself into the cockpit of his state of the art Hoverplane. This futuristic flying machine is equipped with the latest technology – long-range scanner, laser cannon and a limited supply of smart bombs. The latter can be used to destroy any aliens on the screen.

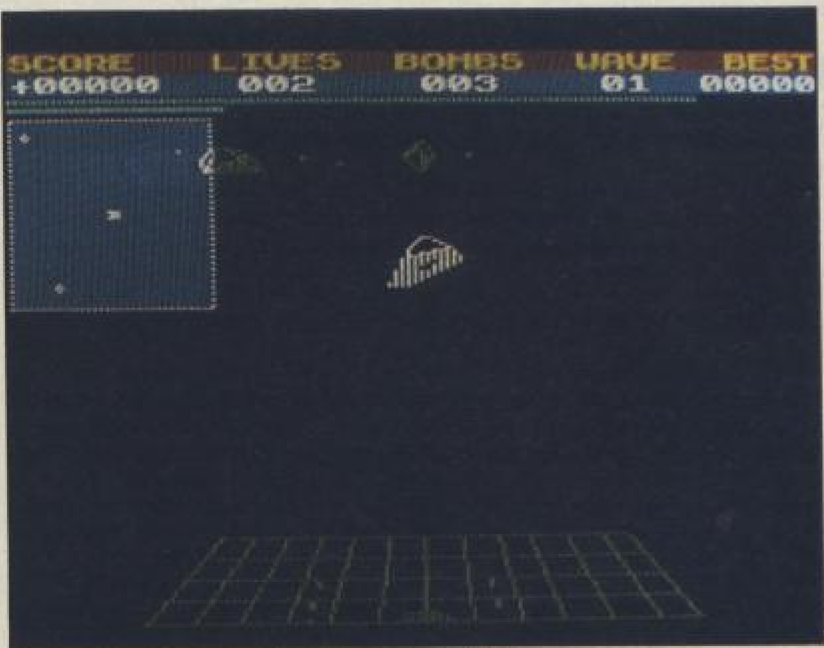
The action is shown in 3-D with wire-frame vector graphics depicting the Hoverplane and enemy ships. The contours of the tree-filled landscape are shown by a pattern of undulating squares depicting the earth's surface. The long-range scanner, in the top left corner of the screen, shows the positions of the enemy ships in relation to the Hoverplane. Gauges above the main playing area show the amount of fuel remaining and the plane's altitude. Extra fuel can be obtained by landing at home base.

The Hoverplane is controlled by thrusting the engines and rotating

MARK

" My first impression of Virus **was that it's extremely hard. Initially I found my Hoverplane to be most uncontrollable but, after some semblance of order was established, I managed to to execute some neat aerobatical stunts. I still didn't shoot very many enemy craft though. Considering this game first appeared on the machines with a bigger byte, Firebird have done a very commendable job converting it to the Spectrum. The landscape rolls along up hill and down dale very smoothly: the only slightly annoying glitches are the colour clash between the Hoverplane and the landscape, and the appearance of the enemy craft on the map as they pass. Overall, a fast and furious blast-'em-up. After the initial control difficulties have been ironed out, it's great fun to play. "**

75%



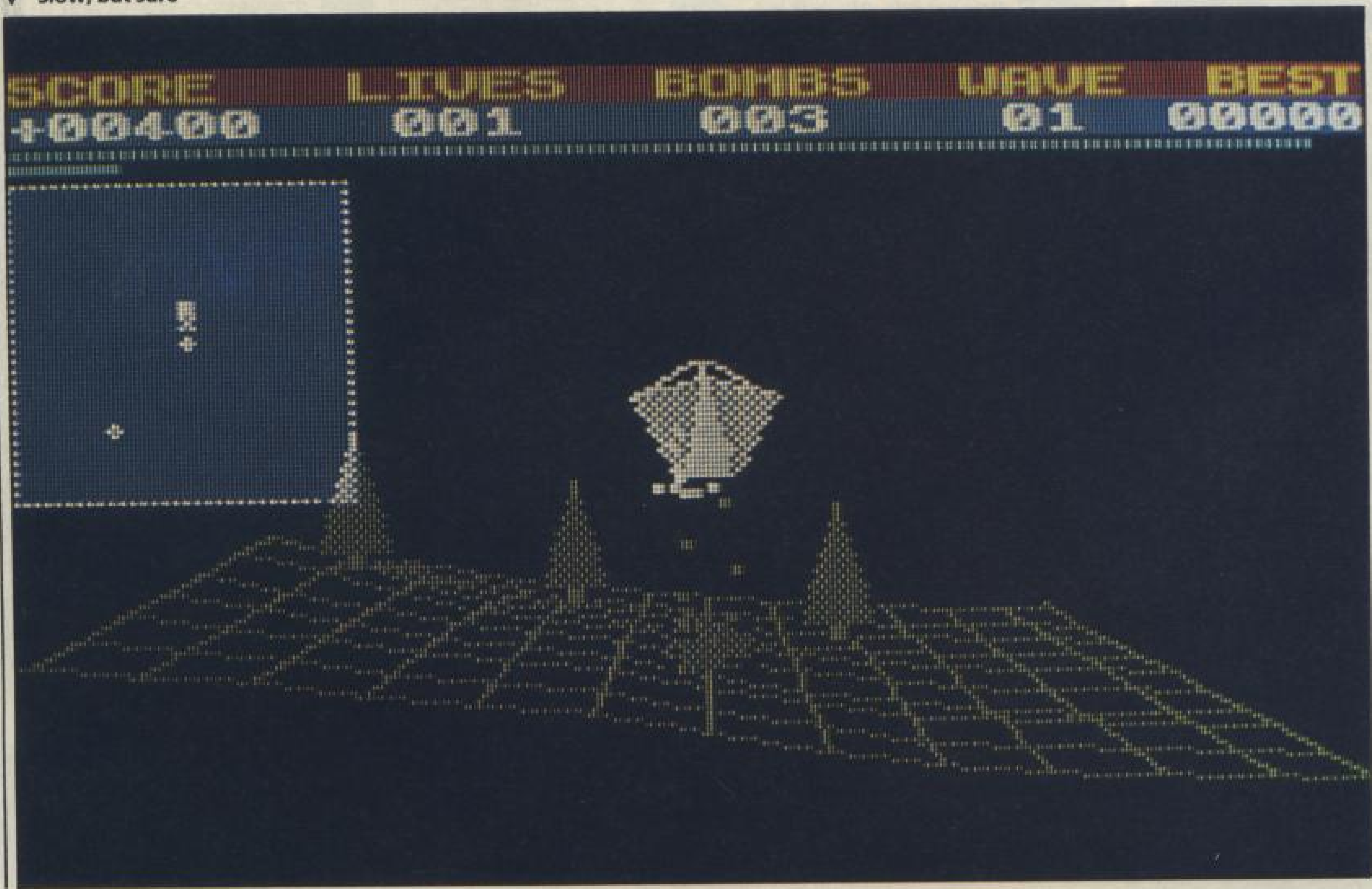
▲ **Archimedes** + *Zarch* = **Spectrum** + *Virus*

NICK

" Virus **is graphically excellent, the 3-D effect works well and the scrolling is smooth. The screen is a green monochrome colour with the exception of the border but as the ship is white, it does tend to clash with anything else it approaches. At first the Hoverplane is terribly difficult to control. The thrust control method is very similar to the ageing thrust games, like** 1985 - The Day After **and the more recent** Thrust II**, but with the added confusion of 3-D. The landscape moves up and down very convincingly making the game look like a wild waltzer ride! The main let down is the sound – not one beep to be heard all through the game. As we all know, an atmospheric sound effect makes a game, but with** Virus **you just have to use your imagination! Even so,** Virus **is great for all those fans of thrust and 3-D – a perfect combination. "**

78%

▼ **Slow, but sure**





▲ **Will the virus be stopped, before it get YOU!**

PHIL

" Yet another wire-frame shoot-'em-up hits the streets. But, the addition of a smooth moving, tree-filled landscape makes Virus **rather unusual. Another innovation is the strange control method which has the Hoverplane flying like a helicopter – it can only thrust upwards and therefore has to dip its nose to achieve forward movement. This is confusing at first and difficult to master and has you crashing continually into the ground. It's easier if you just use the keyboard, though. The movement of the landscape as you skim over the tree tops is surprisingly smooth and quite fast. Unfortunately the attractive 3-D display is accompanied by silence – there's not even the tiniest bleep. As a result there's very little atmosphere and flying around shooting aliens soon gets repetitive. There is little if any strategy involved in** Virus **but even so, it's a well-presented, playable shoot-'em-up. "**

79%

the craft. At high altitudes, the fuel supply is automatically cut and the plane lowers rapidly towards the ground. You move, helicopter-style, by dipping the plane's nose and thrusting.

During play, a map of the land can be displayed showing polluted areas in red. All enemy ships in the attack wave must be destroyed before the whole map turns red. Each wave contains many different aliens, including the dreaded seeders (flying saucers which hover and sometimes land, spraying the deadly virus). Also polluting the area are the high flying bombers. The objective of alien ships (chevron-shaped fighters and kamikaze pests) is to destroy the Hoverplane. Collision with any spaceship results in the immediate destruction of the Hoverplane.

If an alien attack wave is defeated, the player gains a bonus score determined by how much of the landscape is still free of the virus. An extra Hoverplane and smart bomb are awarded every 5000 points.

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: the wire-frame 3-D landscape suggest movement very convincingly. Pity about the colour clash
Sound: none
Options: definable keys
General rating: a playable conversion of a 16-bit game. Just slightly too hard to keep you really hooked

Presentation	76%
Graphics	83%
Playability	77%
Addictive qualities	71%
OVERALL	**77%**

POGOSTICK OLYMPICS

Producer: **Silverbird**
Retail price: **£1.99**
Authors: **Probe Software**

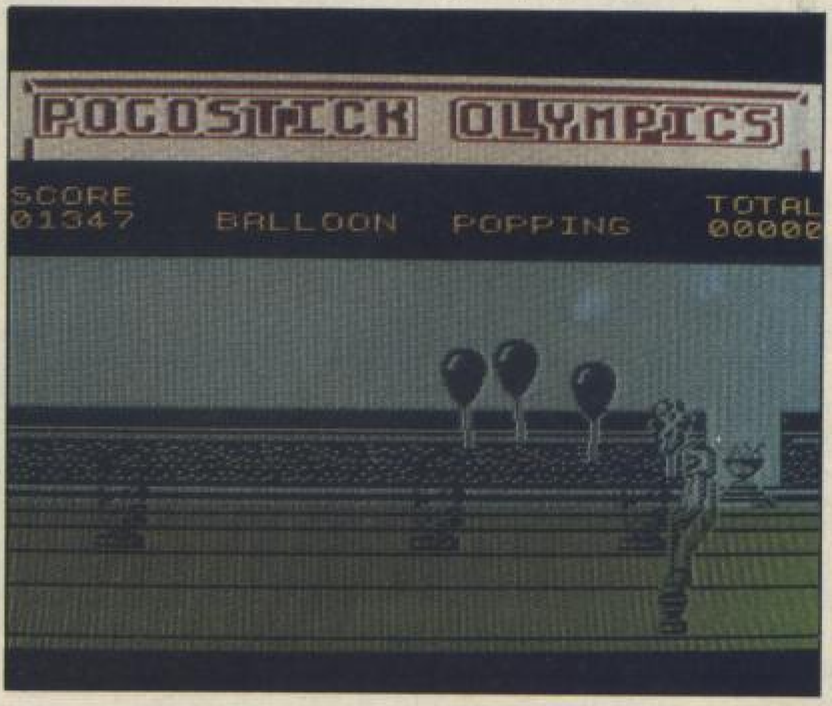
Older readers may recall a strange craze that caught on a good few years ago which involved standing on a stick with a spring on the end and bouncing around. This ancient art was known as pogoing.

Pogostick Olympics revives this weird pastime and elevates it from the pages of *The Beano* to the status of a sport. The game is divided into five events.

Event number one has you bouncing along trying to pop floating balloons with a spiked helmet. Next is the 110m hurdles which is closely followed by the triple jump, target practice and an obstacle course.

The player gets three attempts to qualify for each event before being eliminated from the contest. If all three events are successfully completed with a high enough score, the player has pogoed himself into the elite hall of fame.

▼ **Who needs muscles when you've got a pogostick?**



CRITICISM

● " After skateboarding in *720°* and rollerskating in *Skate Crazy*, the designers of *Pogostick Olympics* had to look back a few years to find a suitable craze on which to base a game. I thought the only place where pogoing remained in fashion was within the pages of *The Beano*. The game itself contains five very tedious events, none of which is in the least bit playable. Progress is so easy that even a three-year-old could complete the game. Every event is very similar in both graphics and gameplay, with a simply drawn figure bouncing through a horizontally scrolling landscape and the controls themselves are very basic. This, along with the ease of completion, makes this a dodo instead of a pogo simulation. If this is what pogoing is about give me a skateboard any day! "
PHIL **21%**

● **" At least when you're pogoing out in the open air there's scope for a little variety: you can wave your arms about (look no hands!), perform daredevil hops, and hurtle head-first into the flowerbed. This sort of action is painfully absent from Silverbird's simulation. In fact, it doesn't really simulate anything very much. All you can do is waggle the joystick, press fire every now and then, and hope for the best. Jerky graphics and simplistic backdrops mean that you can't even enjoy the scenery as you're bounding along. "**
KATI **19%**

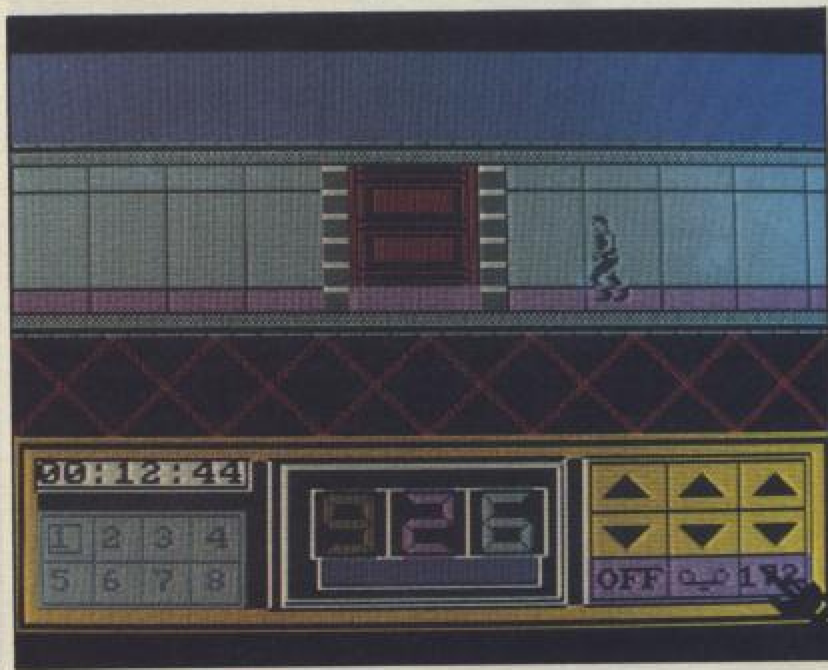
COMMENTS

Joysticks: Kempston
Graphics: simplistic sprites and samey backdrops for every event
Sound: sparse spot effects
General rating: it's probably safer to stick to the real thing

Presentation	20%
Graphics	30%
Playability	25%
Addictive qualities	19%
OVERALL	**20%**

IMPOSSIBLE MISSION II

▼ Note the complex, icon-driven control panel at the bottom of the screen



Producer: **Epyx**
Retail price: **£8.99 cassette, £12.99 disk**
Authors: **Szenttornyai Laszlo and Kovats Imre**

Elvin Atombender, the infamous mad professor was vanquished by the fearless Agent 4125 in the original *Impossible Mission*. Two years on the evil egghead has returned, and plans to destroy the world with a missile. Elvin's headquarters are an eight-tower complex somewhere within the country.

Play begins in a randomly selected tower, each of which has up to five rooms accessed by using the elevators. The rooms contain platforms and lifts, guarded by six different types of robot. Furniture, plants and other objects found in each room and can be searched for digits and other useful items.

Digits form the numeric codes needed to gain access to the next tower. These are stored in a pocket computer which can only be used in the corridors. Some of the digits collected are useless and the code is only completed when all three correct digits have been found and arranged in the right order.

Some items conceal a variety of different commands which are carried out using a menu called up from the computer terminals scattered about the rooms. Utilising these you can disable patrolling robots for a few seconds, reset the lifts to their initial positions, move certain floors horizontally, gain extra time and set bombs. Time bombs explode a few seconds after they have been placed; normal bombs are only detonated when a robot moves over them.

Agent 4125 is extremely agile and can somersault from platform to platform. Collision with certain droids or their plasma fire removes one of ten lives. Other robots lay mines which must not be stepped on. If you fall through the bottom of the screen, the mission is over.

In each tower there is a safe which must be blown open by using a time bomb. Inside is a musical sequence which is stored on 4125's miniature cassette deck. This has standard controls to allow the editing of the various sequences. Some of the sequences are duplicated and must be eliminated.

Agent 4125 has only three hours to assemble the correct sequences to allow access to Elvin's control room via the express elevator. This room contains three terminals but only one halts the missile countdown – the others mean instant death.

KATI

" Impossible Mission II **has all the improvements you'd expect from a game that's being released nearly three years after its predecessor. Agent 4125 leaps and bounds gracefully through an incredibly complex environment of treacherous platforms and ledges which boasts some very tricky screens. Certain rooms makes pretty stiff demands on the powers of lateral thinking, especially as the array of collectable bonuses means that you can negotiate practically every problem in several different ways. You need every single one of your ten lives: any second you can hurtle through perilous gaps in the floor, tumble off an inopportune lift or cross the path of a wild, warmongering patrol droid. It's just a pity that the sound doesn't match up to the high standards of the gameplay. Even without it, you have an action-packed platform challenge which should keep you on the edge of your seat for hours at a time.** "

85%

PAUL

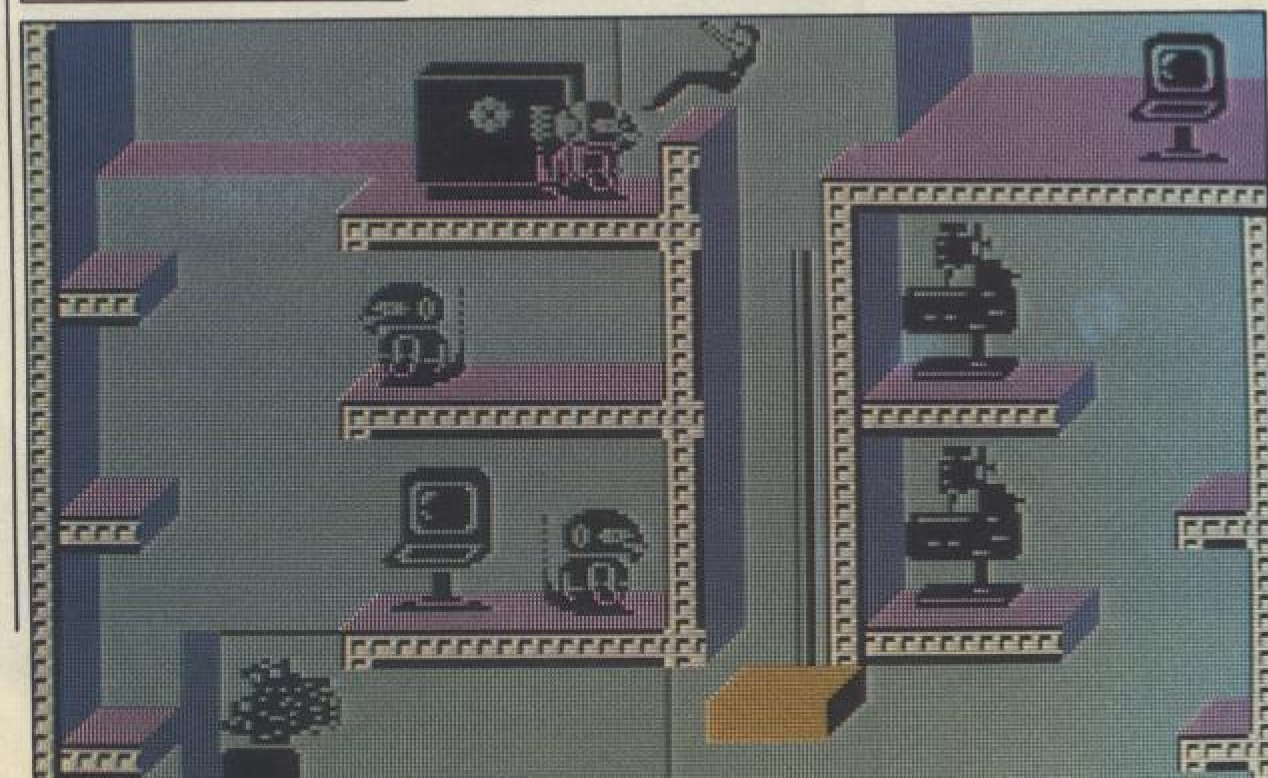
" Impossible Mission II **picks up where the prequel finished – on a VERY high note. I played** Impossible Mission **over and over for many months and it seems as if I'm going to be just as busy with the follow-up. Elvin may still be up to his old tricks, but that doesn't mean the game content is archaic.** Impossible Mission II **has all the good points of the first plus many extra tweaks and improvements making it a game of today, rather than a new angle on an old concept. The gameplay may be the same, but with improved graphics, extra robots, more rooms and tougher puzzles** Impossible Mission II **is one of the best summer arcade strategy games you could wish for.** "

88%

MARK

" Impossible Mission II **has done nothing to tarnish my liking for the series. Graphically, the game is impressive, with a very athletic Agent 4125 leaping and bounding around the screen, vainly attempting to keep out of the reach of the robots' steely grip. The old grey cells are also ably exercised by the fiendishly difficult, but entirely logical, puzzles. As with the original game, the player is only given a set time limit to defeat the mad professor: this adds a definite urgency to the proceedings. Stop Atombender or it's goodbye cruel world! More fun for fans of the original** "

70%



COMMENTS

Joysticks: Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: detailed, bright and colourful
Sound: tune on loading, minimal spot effects
General rating: with so many improvements and expansions on the original *Impossible Mission II* shouldn't be missed. Immediate fun and long term addiction

Presentation	78%
Graphics	82%
Playability	88%
Addictive qualities	85%
OVERALL	**84%**



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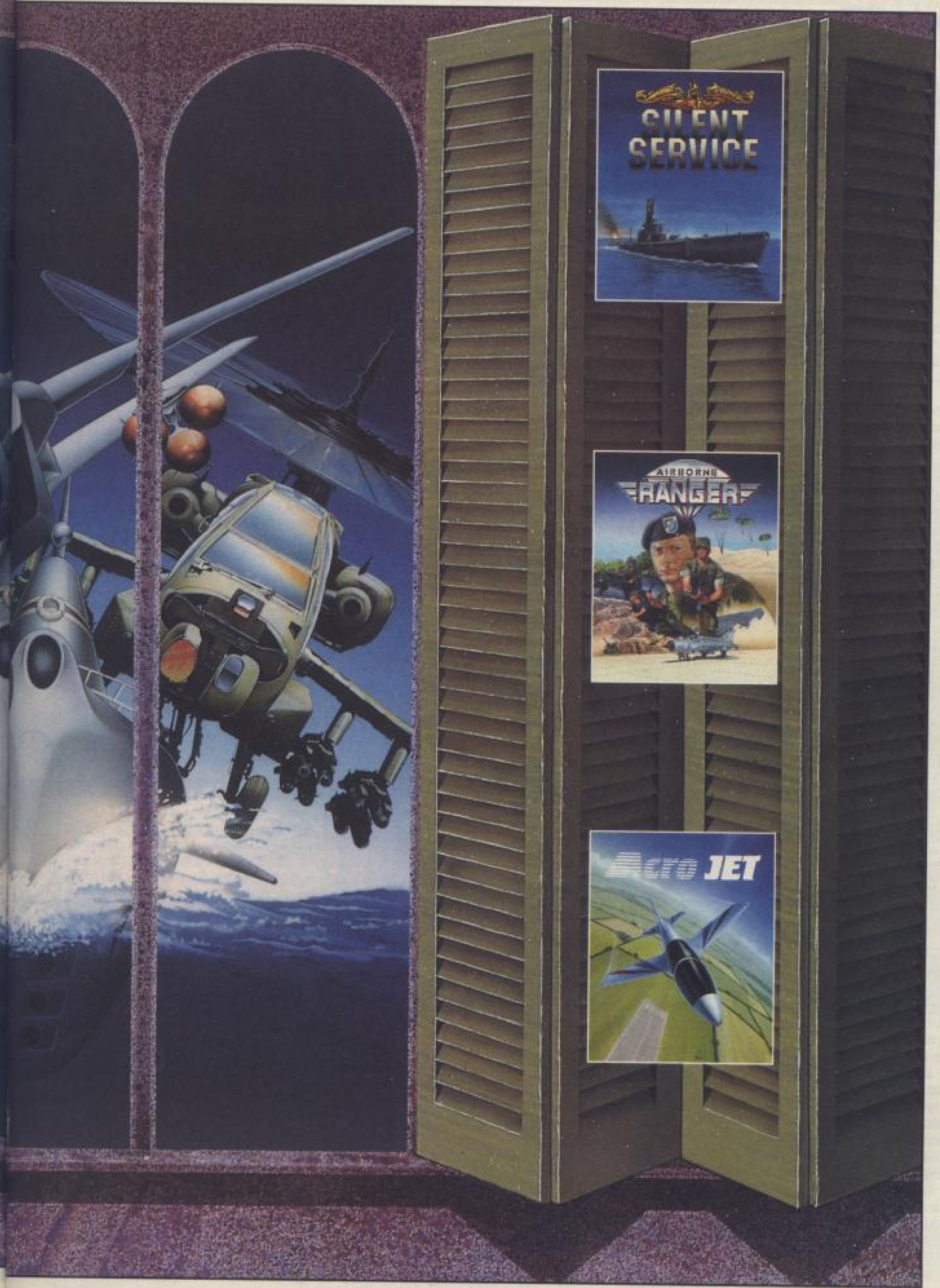
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ARCTICFOX

Producer: **Electronic Arts**
Retail price: **£12.99 cassette, £14.99 disk**
Authors: **Dynamix**

Arctic Fox is a tank simulation set in the tough terrain of Antarctica. The player controls the Arcticfox; an advanced tank armed with various weapons and equipped with many instruments.

The action is shown in 3-D vanishing point perspective with wire frame graphics. A radar screen gives the position of the Arcticfox and its enemies.

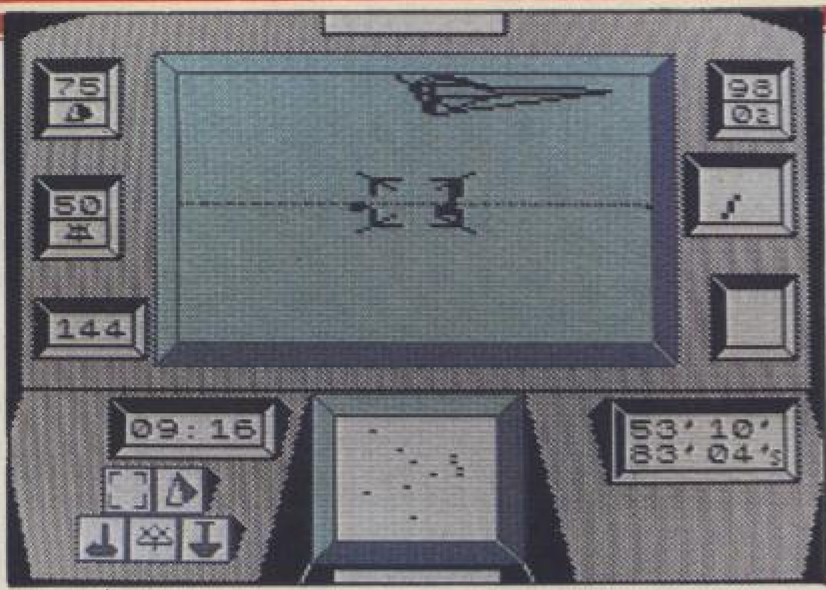
Charged with the objective of destroying the enemy's main fort, the tank moves across a terrain of snow and ice encountering ridges which can be climbed to obtain a strategic viewpoint, and slippery mud flats.

On the ground, hazards consist of slow-moving heavy tanks, light tanks, non-shooting reconnaissance sleds, stationary missiles and floating mines. There are also enemies in the air: fast-moving fighters and reconnaissance flyers.

The Arcticfox has the ability to burrow into the snow and hide from enemy forces. Its guided missiles can be controlled after firing and the inclination of the tank's cannon can be altered to allow it to shoot either ground or aerial enemies.

CRITICISM

● " *Arcticfox* comes with the detailed instruction booklet necessary for a complicated game of this type, but the game doesn't really live up to the promise of complex strategy in the manual. Control is awkward and unresponsive, with the tank movement being very sluggish. The graphics are monochromatic and slow and indistinguishable from a distance. The guided missile option is difficult to use, and it's hard to alter the cannon's inclination; a keyboard control would have been quicker than having to select a special function. Gameplay is fairly simple (like a slow *Battlezone* clone); the various strategic options don't seem to enter into play much, especially as they're so awkward. If only the programming had been up to the task of converting the promising game design it could have been so much better; as it is, it's unplayable and irritating. "
PHIL **40%**



▲ A spot of target practice

● " Arcticfox **is just another 3-D line graphics game in the vein of** Catch 23. **Just like** Catch 23, **it's no fun to play and quickly gets incredibly boring. The graphics seem to have a different line thickness to other 3-D games and this makes them look blocky and unattractive. There's the odd sound effect here and there but no tune on the extended 128K version. The way it loads is terrible with all the borders in the game loading as SCREEN$ files and then being saved to memory. This takes ages and makes the front end of the game monotonous.** Arcticfox **is a very disappointing release from Electronic Arts. "**
NICK **43%**

● " Arcticfox *reminded me greatly of that ancient blast from the arcade past* – Battlezone. *One thing I did notice, though: the vehicle is called Arcticfox, yet, according to the instruction manual the south pole is a mere 717 miles away. I think perhaps someone's geography isn't quite up to scratch. Graphically the*

THE FURY

Producer: **Martech**
Retail price: **£8.99 cassette, £12.99 disk**
Authors: **Jas Austin and Dave Dew**

Fasten your seat belt for a space age demolition derby! *The Fury* is a futuristic racing game for daring drivers. The race takes place on a looping track called the Rim which floats in space. The Fury itself is a gateway to a strange dimension which, if hit, can transport the car to another part of the track.

The season consists of 25 races of which there are three basic types: a Time Run which is a race against the clock with no weapons allowed; a Killing Race in which the player's aim is to destroy as many Noids (novice drivers) as possible, and a Tag Race where one car carries the 'IT' tag which does constant damage to the car, but can be passed to another car by colliding with it.

You start with the cheapest type of car – the Avenger. This has poor performance and low shield protection. Before each race, the player has the option of buying a new car, but only if he has enough money; this is earned by doing well in races. The cars range from the cheap Avenger to the state of the art, but very expensive, Anome. There are also specialist cars such

PHIL

" The instructions to The Fury **are very long and detailed, even giving a history of RIM racing. The first thing you realise is the very high danger level of this sport – you can't help getting blown up! The graphics are pretty bland but the way the perspective of the cars changes as they move up and down the RIM, gives them a sense of solidity. The process of accumulating money to buy better and better cars keeps you interested, as do the options of buying various weapons. I particularly like the missiles which have smoke trailing from them. My only gripe is that the action itself could have been a bit more exciting – perhaps a few track obstacles. However, the game is very absorbing and mixes strategy with arcade action to good effect. "**

85%

MARK

" Not another race game, I thought. But after extensive play, I came to the conclusion that The Fury **is entertaining – at least for a while. The presentation is polished. I especially liked the cross hairs used to make your choice on the options screen. Fellow racers, bumping and jostling around the track, are well-defined and do their best to make sure that the player doesn't survive the race in one piece. On later laps interesting weapons can be added to increase your chances of survival (there's a price on your head, after all) which adds to the general variety. So stay lucky, and pray that you live long enough to spend that bounty money. "**

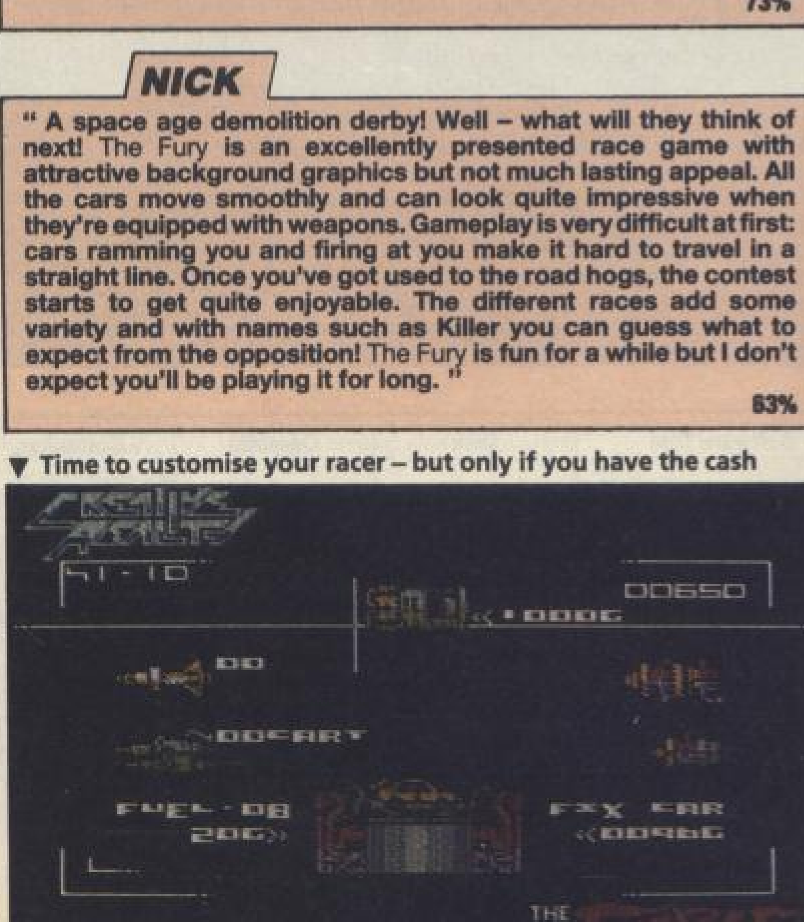
73%

NICK

" A space age demolition derby! Well – what will they think of next! The Fury **is an excellently presented race game with attractive background graphics but not much lasting appeal. All the cars move smoothly and can look quite impressive when they're equipped with weapons. Gameplay is very difficult at first: cars ramming you and firing at you make it hard to travel in a straight line. Once you've got used to the road hogs, the contest starts to get quite enjoyable. The different races add some variety and with names such as Killer you can guess what to expect from the opposition!** The Fury **is fun for a while but I don't expect you'll be playing it for long. "**

63%

▼ Time to customise your racer – but only if you have the cash



game is mediocre. The interior display of the tank is impressive, but what goes on through the viewport isn't. Jerkily scrolling, wire-framed vehicles of destruction wobble around bland and totally uninteresting backdrops like motorists out for a Sunday drive. Trundle around a while, fire a couple of missiles, trundle about a bit more – that's the only excitement of the game. Either that or as soon as the game starts you have half a dozen missiles at your flank and one fried tank driver. I'm usually all for this type of game, but Arcticfox didn't impress me very much. "

MARK **42%**

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: archaic, wire-framed 3-D
Sound: scratchy spot effects
Options: training level. Enemy preview and beginner level on 128K
General rating: a botched rejuvenation of an ageing genre

Presentation	55%
Graphics	45%
Playability	40%
Addictive qualities	41%
OVERALL	**41%**

as the Waster which is good for Killing Races but too slow for other competitions.

The equipment menu allows the player to purchase fuel and weapons and, when necessary, have his car repaired. Weapons (only to be used in Killing Races) include missiles, machine guns and two types of flame thrower.

During the race a collision with computer-controlled racers will cause damage to the player's car (indicated on a diagram below the main playing area). If you're not driving in an exciting enough fashion (bad for viewing figures), the judges will track your car with a cross hair and destroy it.

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: lacking in colour but fairly detailed
Sound: the odd blip with some very low-key crash effects
Options: definable keys
General rating: a compelling action game but not quite as fast and furious as the racy title suggests

Presentation	75%
Graphics	68%
Playability	73%
Addictive qualities	66%
OVERALL	**72%**

DREAM WARRIOR

Producer: **US Gold**
Retail price: **£8.99**
Authors: **Tarann**

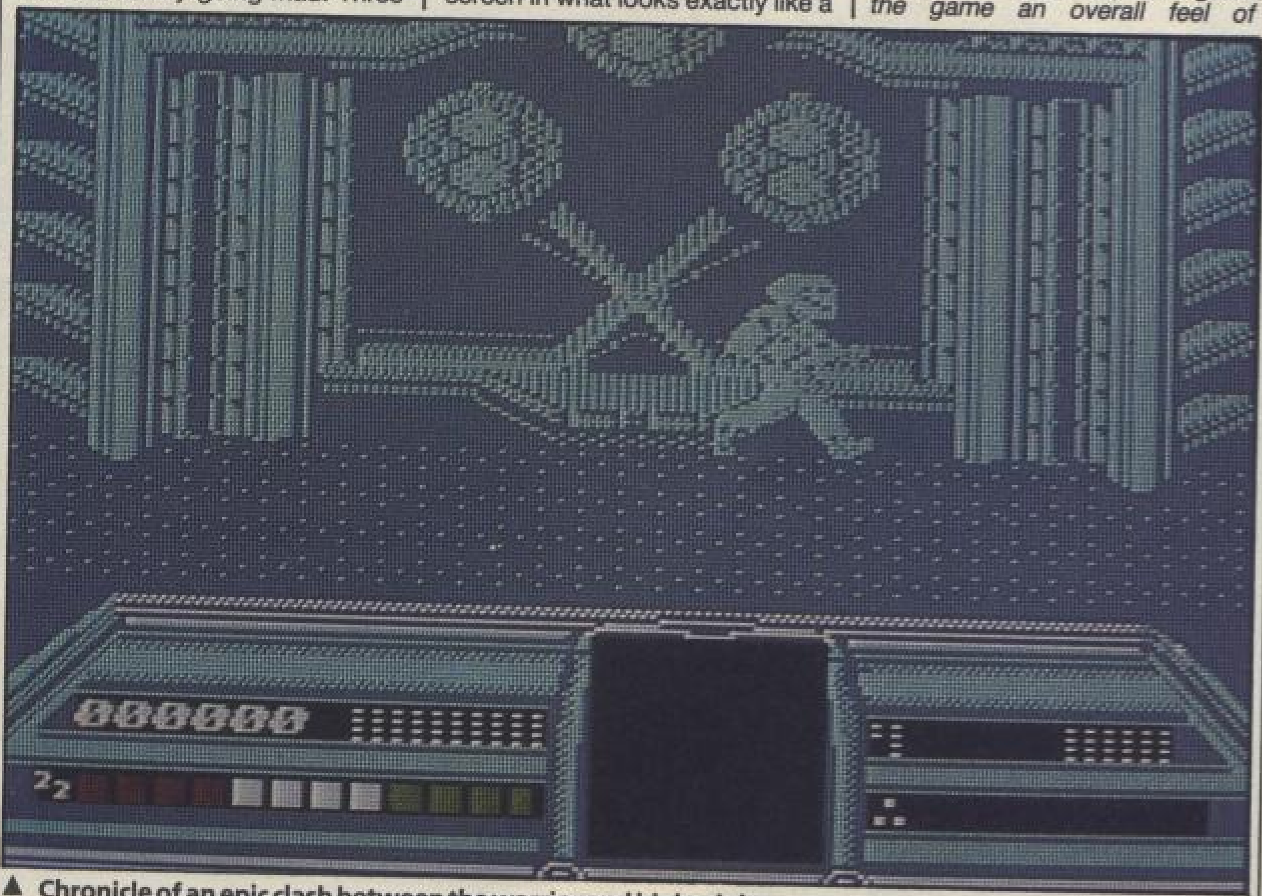
In a future world, controlled by the Master Focus, war is no longer fought on the physical plane, but in people's brains; instead of their lives the victims lose their minds.

The Focus fellowships are battling for supremacy and as a result of their psychic activity, the world is slowly going mad. Three members of a resistance group have been captured. Your mission is to enter the minds of these men and destroy the Focus's most powerful weapon – Ocular, the Dream Demon.

Two of the men are imprisoned in the offices of Megabuck Inc, whilst the third is trapped in the world of Wyrm, a planetoid two-headed snake. A dream hopper provides transport between dreams, provided sufficient energy is available.

Throughout all areas, demi- and giant demons roam; if the player hits them, he will awaken by degrees. Shooting the demi-demons releases a variety of globes which bestow such goodies as lift passes and cards giving the player access to sleeping potions. For each two blue psy-globes collected a section of a dreamer's image is reassembled in the centre of the screen display.

Having collected all three images, you face Ocular, the prince of madness. Shooting each of his six eyes in turn destroys the evil monster and simultaneously, releases the world from its nightmare.



▲ **Chronicle of an epic clash between the warrior and his backdrops**

CRITICISM

● " In my opinion *Dream Warrior* is dire. A splodgy main character sprite hobbles around a cluttered screen in what looks exactly like a diver's suit. Scrolling is jerky, with the meanies unconvincingly hurtling across the screen. *Dream Warrior* bored me to tears within the first few minutes of play. At first, I ignored the graphics and prayed that some sort of game was hidden beneath the outer layer – I was disappointed. This type of simple shoot and collect-'em-up is as old (and as interesting) as the proverbial hills. "

MARK **29%**

● **" The use of colour in** Dream Warrior **is terrible. Variously coloured demi-demons move over garish two-coloured backdrops with terrible colour clash. I thought the blue and cyan colour scheme of the first level was bad, but on another level it's even worse: red and white – it's enough to make you throw up! As if that isn't bad enough, the main character is clumsily drawn and even the scrolling is very jerky. The whole game looks such a mess! Trundling around, shooting demons and collecting their pods is so boring and repetitive. The whole exercise seems totally tedious and pointless – enough to send you to sleep! I could never have dreamed of such a monotonous, badly programmed game – even in my worst nightmares. "**

PHIL **27%**

● *" The main character is detailed and so are the backgrounds – it's just a pity they're both in the same game because they look terrible together. The controls are awkward – you can't go in any direction without bumping into something. The character recognition is clumsy and gives the game an overall feel of untidiness. When a couple of aliens come on to the screen it looks as if the game has crashed rather than progressed – they're just a mass of pixels, the same colour as everything else.* Dream Warrior *looks like one big mistake.* "

NICK **38%**

COMMENTS

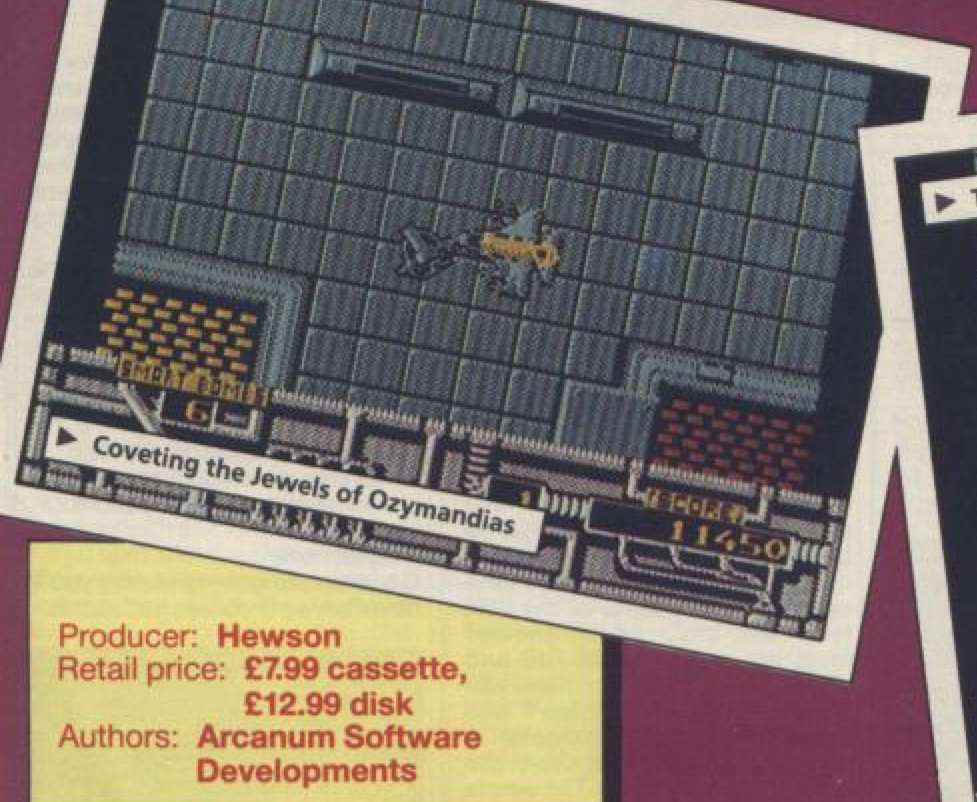
Joysticks: Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: garish backgrounds, blocky sprites and plenty of colour clash
Sound: none
General rating: keep hoping you'll never have a dream as bad as this

Presentation	36%
Graphics	27%
Playability	31%
Addictive qualities	30%
OVERALL	**31%**

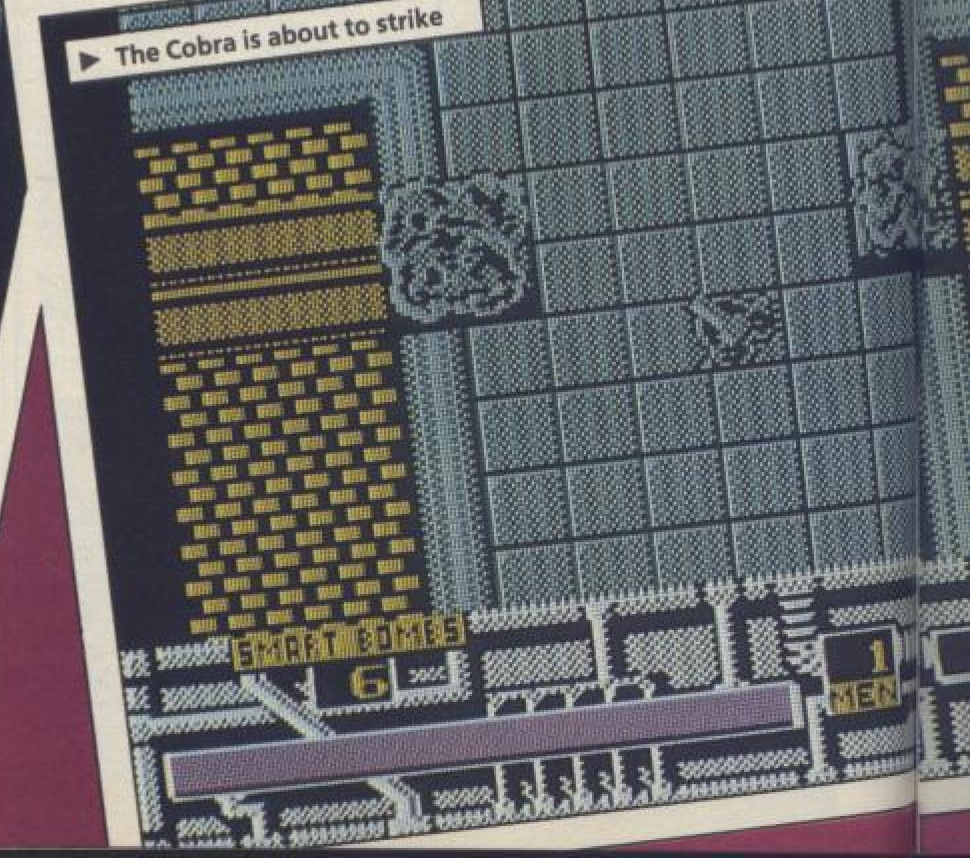
M·A·R·A·U·D·E·R







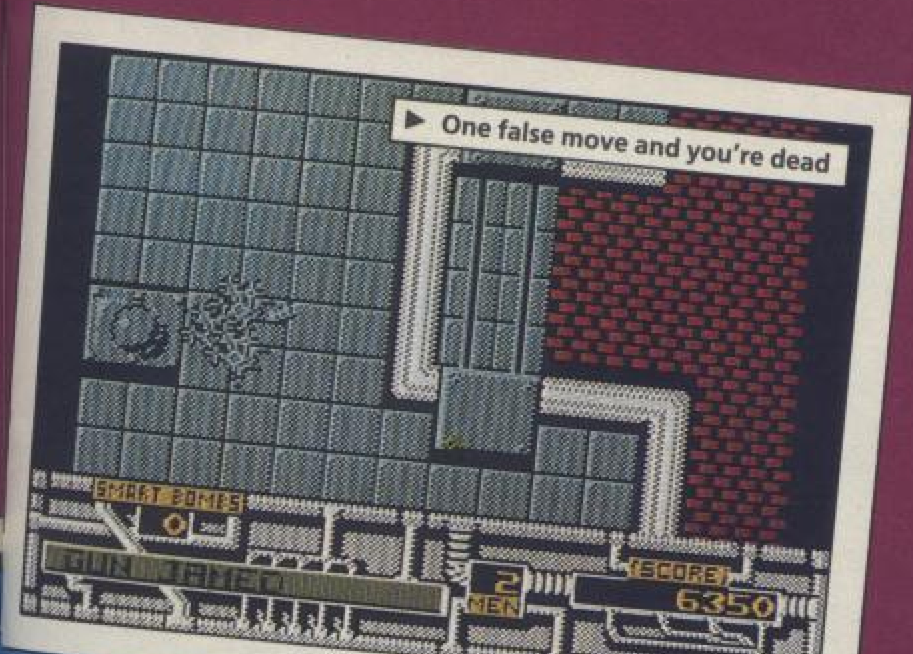
▶ Coveting the Jewels of Ozymandias



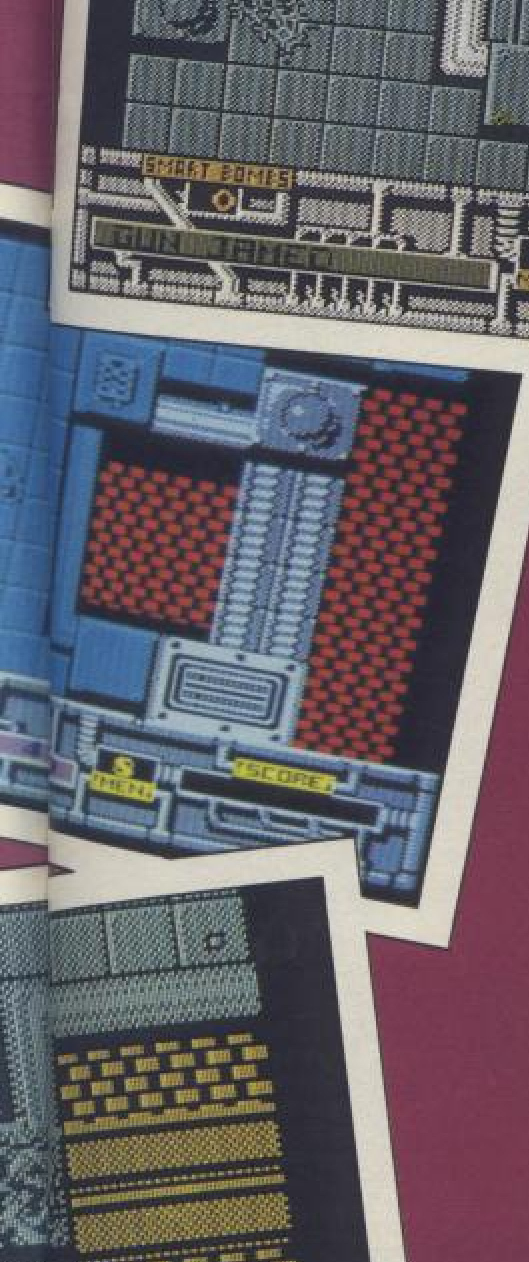
▶ The Cobra is about to strike

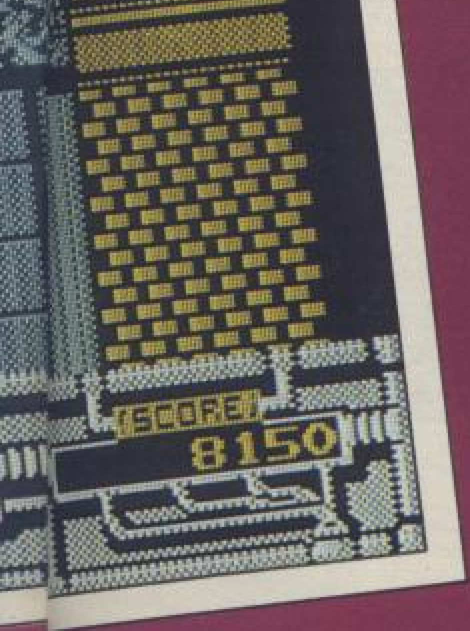
Producer: **Hewson**
Retail price: **£7.99 cassette, £12.99 disk**
Authors: **Arcanum Software Developments**

A CRASH Smash



▶ One false move and you're dead





Ever been stuck in a traffic jam and wished you could blast everything out of the way? Well, just for your benefit Hewson have released *Marauder* featuring a Battlecar armed to the teeth.

It travels through a battlefield full of danger on the planet Mergatron, fighting a multitude of enemies which fire missiles, bombs and Molotov cocktails. The only man capable of controlling this massive Battlecar is the brave Captain C T Cobra. His mission: to recover the stolen jewels of Ozymandius which are buried deep beneath the planet's surface.

The action, viewed from overhead, takes place against a monochromatic, vertically scrolling backdrop. Alien vehicles attack from the ground, ammunition hurtles through the air, missile launchers belch explosive and the occasional aircraft travels across the screen to release a powerful heat seeking missile. In addition to ordinary ammunition, the Battlecar is equipped with a limited number of smart bombs which destroy all enemies on the screen when fired.

To make life in this dangerous environment less hazardous, extra lives and weapons are obtained by shooting beacons which continually change colour. The colour of a particular beacon when shot determines which weapon or ability the Battlecar gains. Certain colours hinder rather than help. They may jam your laser for ten seconds, reverse your controls or deprive you of one of your five lives.

Screen displays show your score as well as the number of lives and smart bombs remaining. Warning of air attacks, and information on extra weapons and lives awarded or lost, is printed out on a status strip when appropriate.

Once the Battlecar has reached the end of a level, he must destroy a plethora of missile-firing aliens to gain access to the next stage. If Captain Cobra manages to get through all the levels, the stolen jewels are safe, and the capable Captain gains an even greater hero's reputation than he had before.

" Hot on the trail of the brilliant Cybernoid, **comes another great game. The detailed Marauder Battlecar trundles around a carefully shaded and very dangerous background. Mobile meanies whizz around the screen in a very menacing fashion, shooting at anything that moves. (The stationary obstacles aren't exactly passive either as they lob homing missiles and explosives through the air.) The action is fast and furious: dare to take your trigger finger away from the fire button for a moment, and another life is lost. With such hazardous and compelling action I couldn't help enjoying** Marauder **– right from the very start. Well done, Hewson – you're on to another winner! "**
MARK **90%**

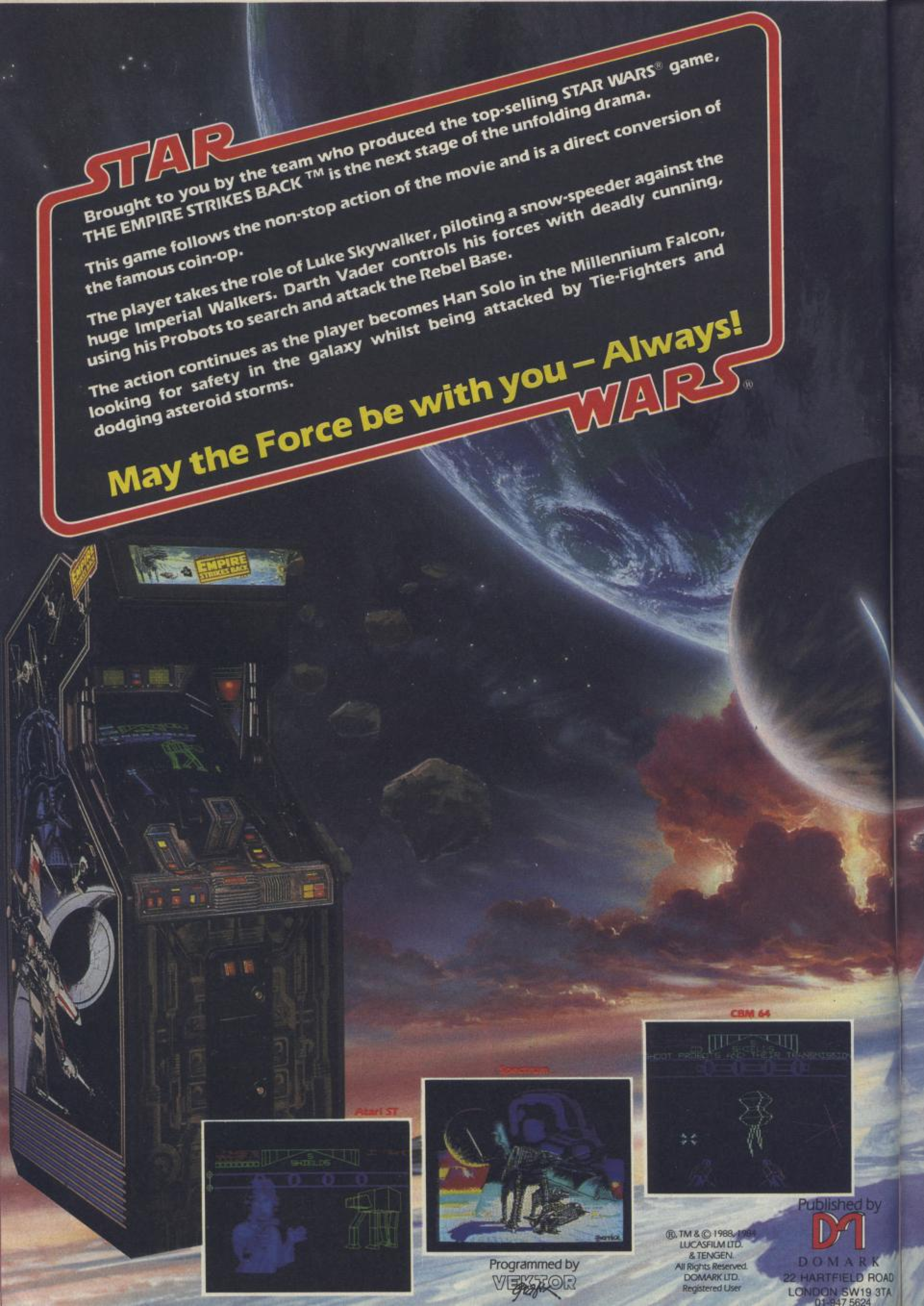
" Another great shoot-'em-up from Hewson hits the streets - and with just as much force as Exolon **and** Cybernoid. Marauder **lives up to the usual Hewson standard of perfection with excellent sound and good quality graphics. The landscapes of the different levels scroll smoothly as you try to blast everything in sight. But there's much more to** Marauder **than just shooting: some of the targets fire homing missiles that chase you wherever you go and are very hard to shake off. There are air attacks and if you shoot the wrong beacon, your gun can get jammed or the controls reverse – right in the middle of all the action. To top all that, each level is just as detailed and challenging as the last; they progress in difficulty to the point at which they become almost impossible (like Level 3!).** Marauder **is yet another excellent game from Hewson. "**
NICK **90%**

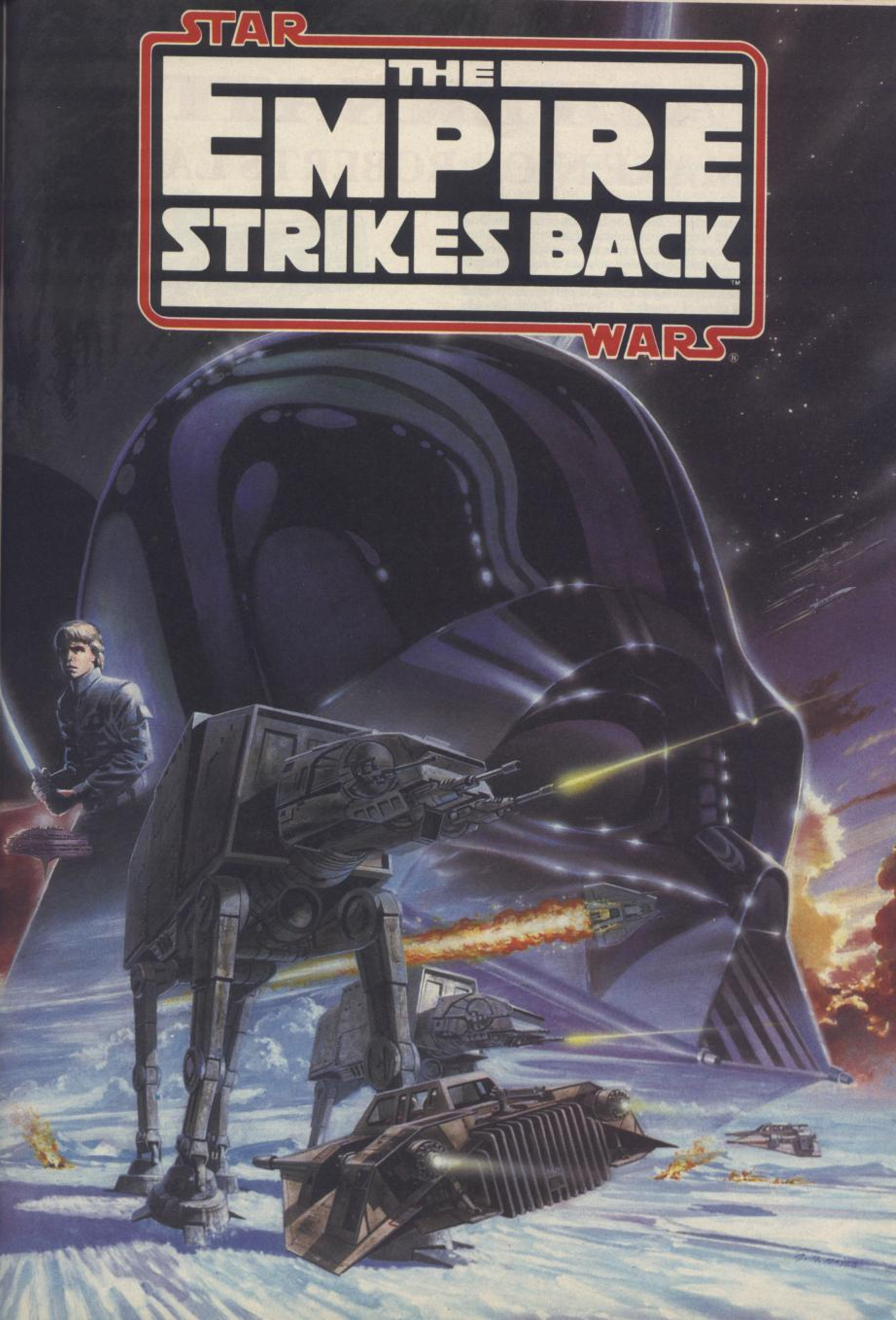
" Marauder **is a glowing example of the high quality we've come to expect from Hewson. The Battlecar itself is quite simply animated and looks more like a spaceship than a car. Though mostly monochromatic, the graphics are well shaded and fairly detailed. There is plenty of sound on the 128K with various tunes on the front end and one during the game which can be swapped for spot effects if it gets irritating. The gameplay is of course very simple; just blast everything in sight! The only exception is the shooting of the coloured beacons where you need to be careful not to lose a life, or inadvertently reverse the car's controls (almost as bad!). My only gripe is that the shields sometimes fail to work when they are meant to be on. Despite this, however, the game is very playable and keeps you coming back for more. An excellent and entertaining blast-'em-up. "**
PHIL **87%**

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: mostly monochromatic with the odd splash of colour and detailed sprites
Sound: limited to atmospheric spot effects on the 48K. Dramatic ingame tune by Dave Rodgers on the 128K
Options: definable keys. Sound effects on/off on the 128K version
General rating: an immensely playable shoot-'em-up with plenty of variety. Up to Hewson's characteristically high standards

Presentation	89%
Graphics	83%
Playability	91%
Addictive qualities	91%
OVERALL	**90%**


STAR
Brought to you by the team who produced the top-selling STAR WARS® game, THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK ™ is the next stage of the unfolding drama.
This game follows the non-stop action of the movie and is a direct conversion of the famous coin-op.
The player takes the role of Luke Skywalker, piloting a snow-speeder against the huge Imperial Walkers. Darth Vader controls his forces with deadly cunning, using his Probots to search and attack the Rebel Base.
The action continues as the player becomes Han Solo in the Millennium Falcon, looking for safety in the galaxy whilst being attacked by Tie-Fighters and dodging asteroid storms.
WARS®
May the Force be with you – Always!
EMPIRE STRIKES BACK
CBM 64
Atari ST
Programmed by
VEKTOR
®, TM & © 1988, 1984
LUCASFILM LTD.
& TENGEN.
All Rights Reserved.
DOMARK LTD.
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Published by
DOMARK
22 HARTFIELD ROAD
LONDON SW19 3TA
01-947 5624


STAR WARS
THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

BE ALTERNATIVE
AND MAKE NICK ROBERTS LAUGH

Unless you're a Martian and have spent the last three years travelling the universe in search of the lesser-spotted intergalactic screeching dodo (very tasty), you'll be fully aware that the Seoul Olympics are practically upon us. This is all very well if you're a regular armchair sports buff; hour upon hour of live TV coverage will have you welded to your armchair munching an endless supply of ready salted peanuts and guzzling pints of lemonade. However, if your lifestyle is just that bit more alternative, you prefer to walk on the wild side, eat tortilla chips, wear shades and see yourself as a cool and trendy dude, Gremlin have just the game for you. *Alternative World Games* (85%, page 22) thumbs its nose at all those ordinary sports and lets you take part in some rather more challenging offbeat events.

You can try you hand (well legs, really) at the sack race, hurl a



WITH GREMLIN

CRASH COMPETITION

water-filled boot through sunny Italian skies, pogo boldly around a balloon-marked course, pole jump icy currents or indulge in an endless round of premeditated and provocative pillow fights.

In celebration of this wild and whacky release, Gremlin themselves have gone a little mad. In return for a little alternative activity on your part, they're giving away a **Phillips CD Midi Hi-Fi system, complete with record deck, compact disc player, three-band FM tuner, cassette deck supporting Dolby (whoever they are) and chrome tapes (very posh), an amplifier to make the whole thing work and high quality speakers pulsing out 35 Watts per channel**. Wow!

All you have to do to get your grubby fingers on this whopping great prize, is think up a single, suitably alternative, humorous and possibly side-splitting joke, scribble it on the back of postcard (it's not alternative to forget to include your name and address) and send it to . . . **MAKE NICK ROBERTS LAUGH COMP, CRASH,** *PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB*

Even if you're not first out of the bag, you're still in with a chance of winning one of **25 runner-up prizes**. Clinch one of these and you'll receive **two tickets to Alton Towers**. The black hole, the pirate ship, the corkscrew, the wild water rapids and the longest log flume in Europe are yours to enjoy for a day. Beat that.

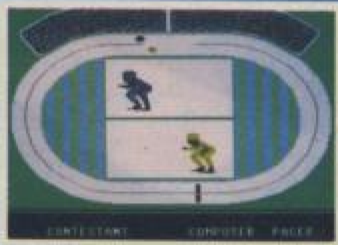
Entries must be received by August 30 and will be submitted to the most stringent tests: the winning joke must make at least three members of the CRASH team, including Nick Roberts, laugh out loud (a formidable task). Re-hashed oldies and rip-offs will be immediately eliminated. Under the circumstances, the decision of the appointed judges has to remain final and binding in all respects.



You are competing against the world's greatest in the greatest and toughest series of winter sports yet devised. Seven events to test your skill and nerve to the utmost; each one with its own individual demands. Practice, patience and more practice are required to stand any chance of a medal. You can do it; you will do it! And what's more you'll have a great time trying!

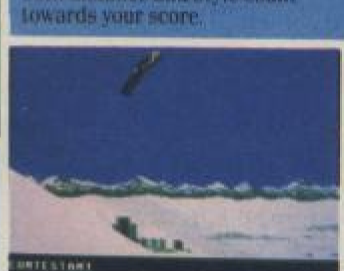
THE GAMES™





Speed Skating – The fastest self propelled sport on earth. A test of strength and rhythm where speeds of 30mph are reached in the quest for gold.

Ski Jumping – Daredevil bravery, nerves of steel and total control are compulsory in this event where both distance and style count towards your score.



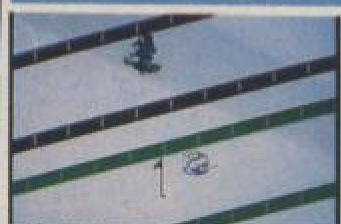
Cross Country Skiing – One of the stiffest tests of pure physical prowess ever devised. Battle with time, terrain and winter itself in this ultimate test of endurance.





Figure Skating – Precision and poise are essential in this most artistic of sports.

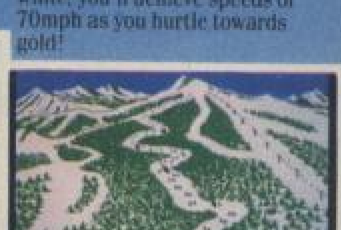
Slalom – Speed, control and split second timing are pre-requisites in this most difficult of skiing events.





Luge – Daring, a touch of winter madness! Lying prone, feet first on a sled you'll use every muscle in your body to make the most of each straight and curve.

Downhill Skiing – A free fall in white, you'll achieve speeds of 70mph as you hurtle towards gold!



EPYX®

Manufactured and distributed under licence from Epyx Inc. by U.S. Gold Limited 2/3 Holford Way, Holford, Birmingham B6 7AX.

All screens from the Commodore 64 version of the game.

Available for **Amstrad CPC** Cassette & Disk · **Atari ST** Disk · **CBM 64/128** Cassette & Disk · **MSX 64** Cassette · **Spectrum 48/128K, + 2** Cassette · **Spectrum + 3** Disk

COMMUNICATIONS

PENNY-PINCHING PRESTEL

PAUL EVANS gets concerned at the cost of living

TWO DAYS after writing last month's article, a press release from Prestel arrives confirming the rumour! Yep, 'netting's going to get more expensive. The charges are to be as follows . . .

Peak Rate *(8am-6pm weekdays)* 7p per minute, a rise of 1p
Standard Rate *(all other times)* 1p, previously free
Quarterly subscription £20, previously £16.50
Charges apply from July 1st

Crying yet? Thought so! I, among many others, am not just unhappy about the new charges, but also very annoyed about the way Prestel has implemented them. However, Micronet has done *its* best to cushion the blow. It seems that this new charge has become wound up in a web of intrigue . . .

SPYHACKER

It seems that Prestel is turning into a regular MI5 system! The first thing that happened was a substantial rebellion against the charges. I expected this, but not what followed. Within days petitions had started. Micro-mags on Prestel and columnists like myself were 'junked' (a word meaning, to be sent many mailboxes) with letters about the charges. Then the unusual events started . . .

The fact was pointed out to me that apparently Prestel had breached their contract with the users, by giving less than thirty days notice of the charges. Not fair, said I, so I decided to arrange a two meetings – one on *Lip-Sinc* (a Spectrum chatline) and another on *TeleTalk*. So I continued to advertise Lip-Sinc heavily all over Micronet, but not much on Prestel. The day came and I logged-on happily to *Lip-Sinc*. I tried to send a message. 'There's something wrong with that page', came the reply. I tried another chatline, same thing happened. I was allowed to watch the chatting going on but not allowed to participate. Now isn't it unusual that the chatline message system should malfunction on my account and leave everybody else chatting happily. Very weird, especially on the day of the meeting. I complained to Prestel, asking what was happening. I got back a letter saying that Keats (the Prestel computer I was using) had temporarily experienced problems with the chatline system. Strange that Dickens did not go whacko too, as the computers are closely linked. I was barred from every chatline!

All these events are very unusual and have never been experienced by me or, to my knowledge, anyone else during my two year spell on Micronet. Have you experienced any trouble? If so, write to (or mailbox 219995412) me.

MICRONET RESCUE

So I phoned the men at the top, Prestel. I asked how they justified the new charges. A spokesperson replied that no increase has been made to the service for the last three years and over that time the retail price index has risen 13%. Also, Prestel has been completely re-fitted with new technology, so there was bound to be an increase. Prestel think this is a fair increase. They have a point!

Cheery old **David Rosenbaum** spoke on behalf of Micronet, giving much the same reply. But



▶ **Dave Rosenbaum: don't worry we'll look after you**

much more to my interest are the actions Micronet is taking to combat the charges and keep hold of customers. Firstly, *Shades* and *TeleTalk* are not affected by the time charges because they are both gateway systems that operate outside of the Prestel system. Secondly, Micronet and Prestel have agreed to stop the time charge between midnight and 8am – a large amount of people use Micronet during the night shift, so that will help. Lastly, Micronet are THINKING of introducing a higher 'time charge-free' subscription – benefiting all-day users.

Now to my mailbox. When I got on there I was swamped by angry netters all lodging complaints about the charges. **Nig** (623860614) has even started a petition – with much support. Many others have given comments that will give cause for alarm . . .

Mark Corcoran (419547362): *'How stupid it is of Prestel.'*
Gobaz (026475503): *'It will kill Micronet. People are definitely going, it will be the death of Prestel.'*
R P Bishop (219998380): *'Please put something in CRASH, this looks like my last night.'*
Zero (219995004): ***'Knobbo, Tracey, Garfield*** *& me are leaving.'* (Sob, sob.)

Most of the above people are planning to leave soon.

People are wondering why British Telecom, the owners of Prestel, with a £220000000 profit last year, cannot subsidise Prestel. Well, the communications watchdog, Oftel, strictly forbids this. Complaints are already being sent to Oftel, asking for a change in the rules.

Micronetter **Richie** (011111747) gave a good answer to a statement made that the charge would be unfair on infrequent users.

'They feebly suggested that a single charge would discriminate against infrequent users. BULL! The 1p per minute discriminates against anyone who goes to work; students; the young; the unemployed . . . in fact everyone except a very rich, idle insomniac!'

But don't forget that Micronet still offers a FREE modem to its yearly subscribers. Still a VTX for Speccy owners, but others, such as Beebers and STers, now get a GEC Datachat 1223 modem (RRP £119.95). A new subscription for one year is £79.95 or £20 per quarter.

And if you take out a Prestel and Telecom Gold joint subscription, you also get FREE access to Micronet! All it costs is £23 a quarter, the usual £40 Telecom Gold registration fee is waived! **John Tomany**, Managing Director



▶ **John Tomany: the man at the top of Micronet, looking after you and me**

of Telemap Group, commented, 'It makes sense for computer users who access Prestel and Telecom Gold to use Micronet as well, and at this price they'd be silly not to'.

Phone Micronet on 01 278 3142 for more details.

BYTES AND PIECES

Telemap have announced that *Shades*, the multi-user game, can now be used by non-Micronet subscribers. *Shades* has regularly clocked over 4000 playing hours a week and is now accessible with a 1200/75 baud modem in viewdata or ASCII formats. Dial 0898 10 0890 to play!

As I predicted, *Hotel California* has been closed. However, not giving up, Telemap have launched *Funtel*; its flagship product being *Shades*. Other features are on-line games and competitions. Sadly, it still goes out at 38p a minute peak rate and 25p a minute standard rate. Phone 0898 10 0890 to log-on!

Melanie Weaver and **Jez Thorpe** have become the first couple to marry after meeting in a multi-user computer game! They are both avid users of *Shades*, having been married in the game for a while, and are now officially married.

The dreaded page 92 might be in for a renovation. In olden days page 92 would list your charges during that quarter. However, when Prestel was renovated, the 92 (as it is known) was changed to give only the details of the charges in the current log-on, and not to total them up – or even include *TeleTalk* charges. At last, Prestel seems to be doing something about it. I have heard that 92 could go back to its original format with a system that registers gateway charges as well! It's all still being planned though . . .

LLOYD MANGRAM'S FORUM



It may be quiet on the software scene, but it's certainly a hive of activity in Lloyd's Forum this month . . .
I have grown to despise summer. When you live in a town as historically important as Ludlow there's absolutely no chance of getting down to a few quiet hours of peaceful typing on my Hermes. What I really need is a nice, quiet holiday in sunny Bournemouth. Sipping cups of Earl Grey, as scantily clad ladies pass me by. Whoops, I'd better watch what I say or I might be in for a bit of literary discussion. Just as you thought Maria Whittaker had gone back into the ad-manager's closet along comes . . . Corrine Russell promoting *Vixen*. The morals of censorship are discussed in SPLIT SCREEN, but that doesn't stop you airing your views . . .

DID YOU KNOW?

Dear Floyd
Did you know that Lloyd Mangram is an anagram of Grammy Dolnal, Gary Mman Doll, Lord Mogy Lamn, Lady Marg Moln, Mallmy Dragon, Allarmm Dogy, Maglorm Dylan and Mad Mong Rally?
Jonathan Reid, Scott Wright and Greg Cogzell, Coventry

Maybe the question should have been, did I want to know?
LM

ALL TOGETHER NOW

Dear Lloyd
I've had a sort of fairly goodish idea, Lloyd; I thought that perhaps you might like to share it with other CRASH readers. I run a fanzine, Microchip, and have been doing so for about two years now. However, I have experienced the problem that dogs nearly every fanziner in the land – lack of review copies from software houses. I convinced a few of our credibility, but alas I shall have to start all over again after having a 'fallow period' for my end-of-year exams. Unfortunately, I think now that many fanzines are set up solely for the purpose of obtaining free software, and this problem has been heightened by competitions such as the well-intentioned YS Fanzine of the Year.

With this in mind, I am considering setting up a kind of umbrella organisation for fanzines. If a fanzine publisher can produce tangible evidence that he/she produces a fanzine for general public consumption, say by sending me two constructive issues of his/her publication, then he/she will be able to state that they belong to such an umbrella organisation. Also, we fanziners could pool our resources e.g., by having a national reader popularity chart, similar to that in CRASH. Such a chart would be meaningless now, because of the fairly low circulations of most fanzines. Any organisation such as the one I am proposing would arguably have more muscle with software houses, as they could be assured of a fanzine's existence, if you see what I mean.

The sooner software houses start to realise what a faithful bunch of Speccy-bashers fanziners are, they may twig that the future of the Spectrum games market lies with the youth of today, who will ultimately be the adult journalists of tomorrow. Even if people with loadsamoney DO desert the Spectrum for the bright lights and pretty pictures of 16-bit land, there will still be the hard core of REAL enthusiasts, who will perhaps have only the amateur press to turn to.

Anyone who is interested in forming such an organisation should contact me at the address below, enclosing a SAE for further details.
Steve Thomas, Microchip Magazine, *37 Park Place, Cheltenham, Glos GL50 2RE.*

PS. We're relaunching in July!

I have looked through many fanzines that have flowed through the CRASH offices, on their way to the all-seeing eyes of Dominic Handy; and there have been many, many excellent 'zines that would not only deserve the time of software houses, but also their support. I have also seen many journals that would look more at home on the walls of a suburban WC. The latter is the main, and just, cause for software houses not sending out review samples to 'zines. Would you send free copies of your magazine to people who were just 'mucking about'? I think not, and quite rightly so. However, it's a bit tough on the supply of games to fanzines. It would be ideal if the companies would pick and choose the best magazines to supply, but sadly they don't have the time to look through nearly one thousand fanzines (yes, that many)!

Anything that gives worthy fanzines even an ounce of credibility can't be bad. All fanzine editors write to Stephen now. It's probably the best idea to come out of Cheltenham since the National Express coach at 14:30.
LM

THE SHAME OF IT ALL

Dear Lloyd
I bought your magazine yesterday and was embarrassed when the newsagent inquired if it was for my grandson.

Your young readers of 28 years should think of women like me – nearly sixty. I recently retired and bought a computer so that I could keep my brain active and learn computing. I was given a game, *Impossible Mission*, as a present and have become hooked on action games.

My problem is buying *more* games, as I have to pretend that I am buying them as presents for young relatives. Now that I have discovered your magazine I can read about the different games, and so can just ask for the game I want to buy by name, instead of looking through the available software.
E Roberts, London SE24.

I know what you mean. I always get my games from Aggie at CRASH Mail Order – it saves money, and a lot of embarrassment. And don't worry E, Impossible Mission II *is coming to your Spectrum very soon. Till then, why not try* Action Force II *for some real action. It certainly loosens up my joints!*
LM

A LONG TRIP

Dear Lloyd
I'm writing to find out if I'm the first person to complete *Rastan*. I completed this game after just two days of buying it, and just to prove that I have completed it, and that I'm not telling porkies, here is the message that appears at the end of the game:-

YOUR QUEST HAS ENDED
AND YOU HAVE FREED YOUR LAND
PRESS ANY KEY

THANKS TO
PAUL MURRAY PROGRAMMER
ED KNIGHT FOR GRAPHICS
MIKE AND STE FOR CARTOGRAPHY

I would also like to know who wrote the little story for the back cover of *Rastan*. From reading the back cover I thought that it would be a challenging game, but when the game had finished loading I found that it was nothing but a mere kill-everything-in-sight game. Why couldn't Imagine put some real storyline into the game, instead of the usual 'You must save your:- land/planet/universe or your pet budgie'?

It's a pity *Rastan* doesn't have the lasting appeal of Imagine's *Renegade* !!!
A Vail, Kent

I can hardly believe that you had time to play Rastan *if you spent two days buying it! And as you didn't enclose a date of purchase it's hard to say if you're the first to complete it.*

I share your feelings about game inlays, though. Perhaps, it would be an idea for all software houses to put the game category on the back of the inlay: i.e., shoot-'em-up; graphical adventure; bash-'em-up, etc. But some games are very hard to categorise and such systems are difficult to implement. Till then you'll just have to wait for the CRASH review . . .
LM

NOT HER AGAIN!

Dear Lloyd
Firstly, why is it that CRASH is slowly but surely turning into a top shelf magazine? I decided not to make a fuss about it when the Maria Whittaker advert came out, but it seems other software houses are taking the liking of this 'technique' of advertising. The *Vixen* advert backs my point.

I quickly skipped the page in case my Mum saw it and to evade having an embarrassing argument with her. Can't anything be done to stop these adverts? I can't really see the point in linking a sexy woman and a computer game. Seeing CRASH is the biggest selling computer magazine, can't you set the example and ban these adverts.

Next point is that SCORES is becoming a total failure! It is, falling into the same pit as Hall of Slime did. Anybody can just write in saying what they presumably got and their name is in CRASH with a chance of a £40 prize. I would have a guess and say that over 50% of scores sent in are not genuine. (E.g., I know for sure that the highest scores on *Zynaps* and *Flying Shark* are complete and utter lies!!!) It would be best if a photo or evidence is required to have your name in SCORES.
David Nijs, Merseyside

The advertising link is not meant to be between 'sexy women and computer games', but between 'sexy women' and computer game buyers – a very different matter. It's quite strange that all the letters of complaint are coming



from men, when it is they (according to the all-knowing ad agencies) who are supposed to be getting the 'kick' from it! Read this month's SPLIT SCREEN article for a view from the so-called victimised party – women – and the affected party – men. Just think, though, it is the male population who are really suffering – they're the ones out of pocket at the end of the day . . .

LM

JUST ONE LOOK

Dear Lloyd
Is Nick Roberts CRAZY?! In Issue 50, *Garfield* was reviewed, and was a Smash. In the very same issue, Nick printed a whole map of the game,lots of tips, then, in Issue 51 a cheat mode. In Issue 51 he printed a whole solution and some solutions for *Nebulus*. In Issue 52, he printed a whole solution to *Dan Dare II*. I think whole solutions spoil games. I wanted to buy *Garfield*, until I saw the solution in the same issue. It would put anyone off buying it; and any game they could buy and already have a full solution to. Software companies would surely not want this. But I think there should be a system, rather like that of Signstumps. And that brings me to a complaint about the Adventure Trail. Derek Brewster never printed a full solution in Adventure Trail (only once, and that was someone else's fault) yet when he left, you printed a full solution for *Sinbad And The Golden Ship*.
Carl O'Connor, Shankill, Eire

Nick says, he always likes to keep you informed of the latest tips for the latest games. Pundits say that sales of a full-price game are usually dead after three months, therefore so are Nick's tips – unlike an adventure game which seems to last for ever. As Nick always says, 'Better to be one step ahead of the crowd than spilling sticky cherry cola in your Amstrad keyboard'. Well, he'd know!

LM

ASKING FOR THE IMPOSSIBLE

Dear Lloyd
Alan Sugar stated that the +3 'was not the last Spectrum', so what will the +4 have? Obviously a disc drive; with the new support for the +3, Amstrad would be stupid to leave one out (though the new one could be a bit quicker). After five years on the market, the Speccy deserves more and better colour (and no colour clash either). This would completely revive the Spectrum software industry, bringing up the quality of games. Unless the +4 can bring better graphics and sound to the speccy owner, the Spectrum will become obsolete by the 1990's.
Richard 'The Maniacal Mapper' Clark, Essex

One thing that Alan Sugar did not state was whether the next Spectrum will be compatible with the last. To have all the visual and audio features of more expensive computers AND be compatible with the old Spectrum will prove difficult, though. Amstrad are always ones to keep VERY quiet about any future plans – you only know when THEY want you to know. Take a look at this month's news for more revelations about Amstrad.

LM



UNCLE SAM ET AL

Dear Lloyd
I was very interested in the two letters regarding *Gunship*, and your reply.
I think that there is very strong evidence for there being a subliminal message in MicroProse's games, which all seem to feature good ol' Uncle Sam defending truth, justice and the American way against the evil un-American forces of subversion, particularly as these games are released when America's military might is being used to squash every Tom, Dick and Mullah who comes along, the idea of subliminally justifying this and softening the public's minds to these conflicts is useful to America. Remember, MicroProse's chief is employed by the Pentagon . . .

Finally, may I suggest to Robert Honway that if he wants a good 128K only game, then CRL have produced a very much upgraded version of *Tau Ceti*, called *Tau Ceti: The Special Edition*. This features many, many improvements upon the excellent original, and should fill a gap!
John Halton, Leeds

MicroProse inform me that their joint owner, 'Wild' Bill Stealey, is just a 'fun loving guy'. Anyway, MicroProse would have a hard time releasing a game when the Americans weren't at war with someone . . .

LM

TEASER TIME

Dear Lloyd
Here are a couple of puzzles for you:-

1 A new software house decides to market its games in three price ranges. Full-price games at five pounds, mid-price games at three pounds and budget games at fifty pence. (If only this was true!)

How could you buy one hundred games for one hundred pounds?

2 Jim has a birthday coming up and asks his parents for a subscription to CRASH. His father agrees, on one condition 'You will play three games of *Match Day II*. Your mother and I will alternate as opponents. If you win two games in a row you get your subscription'.

In the past Jim has won and lost games against both parents but knows that his father is the better player of the two. Which parent should he play first to maximise his chances of winning two games in succession? Should he play father-mother-father or mother-father-mother?

There you go Lloyd, at least it's a change from people whingeing at yer! Keep up the good work.
Nicholas Young, Lancs

Umm, er . . . I think I prefer the whingers!

LM

Oh, yes – the answers . . .
1 Either; 10 full-price, 2 mid-price and 88 budget.
Or; 5 full-price, 11 mid-price and 84 budget.
2 If Jim is to win two games in a row he must win the second game. So it's to his advantage to play that against the weaker opponent. He must also win at least once against the stronger opponent, his father, and his chances of doing so are greatest if he plays his father twice. So it's father-mother-father.

Of course, well I knew all along, really.

LM

A BAD WORKMAN . . .

Dear Lloyd
I have just got Issue 52 of CRASH and feel I have to write and complain. CRASH has steadily been going downhill, but this issue seems particularly bad and here's some gentle hints on how to bring CRASH back up to its high old standard.

Firstly the cover, I mean it's just all writing, apart from the tiny quarter page drawing in the corner, it looks as if it was whipped from underneath Oli's airbrush before it was anywhere near finished.

Now Playing Tips and Nick Roberts. The guy is a first class pranny, he prints pokes for games which get 12% (really worth while) and the maps are ultra-rubbish, too big, no detail and badly drawn. So do everyone a big favour and do some serious grovelling to Robin Candy, to get him back on the job (yes I know you'll hate it, but Nick is such a git; look at his *Target; Renegade* review 'do you ever feel like kicking your dog's



head in?', what a weirdo).
Now reviews; all reviews should be given a full page, budget or not. If you're not careful you may end up in the ridiculous situation of ZZAP where a game gets 90% but still only has a page and one screen shot. Now the big complaint, the thing which really annoyed me this month was the appearance of the dreaded mail order companies, long lists of games with a massive one pound off, your rival mags are full of these rubbish adverts, not are they incredibly boring to look at, they are notoriously unreliable and thousands of people have lost money through them. Please get rid of them, or before you know it you will be printing listings (arggh, no, arggh mass suicide!). Anyhow, CRASH Mail Order is just as cheap, and ultra fast. It took a week for me to get *Cybernoid* while my friend has been waiting five weeks for a game order through Your Sinclair. So please take my advice, give Oli less work, get rid of Nick, get rid of mail order adverts and give a full page review to all games and CRASH will be Number One again.
Neill Stone, Ramsgate, Kent

The theory behind putting text on *the cover is to inform the potential buyer of what's in the magazine. Are the facts that Nick Roberts is on the cover (of Issue 52) and your dislike of Nick wholly unconnected? In defence of Nick I must say that a playing tipster's maps are only as good as his suppliers. Nick will always put in a beautifully drawn map, if he has one. Nick says, if you want some good artwork then take a look at next issue's* Beyond The Ice Palace *map.*
And to the ever-running space argument. Ed (yes that means all of them!) has constantly told me that it would be totally impractical to give every game review a whole page. Poor games don't necessarily deserve as much space as good games; after all if you're not going to buy it then why read a lot about it! Budget games generally get less space because cheap games are mostly bought on impulse, with a few spare coins. Whereas full-price games are 'high-risk' purchases and deserve more comprehensive and in-depth reviews.
As to mail order. Well you know who's the best, so send Aggie your money!
LM

VALUE FOR MONEY?

Dear Lloyd
Many of my friends who have Spectrums are hoping to advance soon into the 16-bit world, by buying Amigas. Now at £450 for an Amiga it's a big step. But what will they do with it, just play games; my friends are just basically buying Amigas to play souped-up versions of Spectrum games.
Just because the Amiga has better sound and graphics it doesn't make the games any more playable and addictive, which is in my opinion what counts in a game. They will spend £25 on a game, the same game on a Spectrum could be just as compelling and playable, and when you're enjoying a game you don't seem to notice the inferior graphics and beepy sound.
It's fair enough buying a 16-bit machine if you will use it for things other than games. If you want superior graphics for a games machine, why not buy a Sega System for only £100?
Andrew Morgan, Norfolk

Consoles are a completely different matter. Many people, including myself, could not bare to have the limitations of a console, instead of a computer – buy a console as well as a Spectrum!
Buying a computer is just like buying a car. The great expense is not the initial purchase cost, but the hidden running costs. Is it really worth paying an extra £15 for enhanced sound and graphics (although you should see Interceptor *on the Amiga – Ed). As the Amiga is still in its infancy I'd wait a while till the market place settles down to an acceptable quality. Read the 16-bit feature for more information and thoughts on the new beasts.*
LM

DIDST THOU THAT KNOW?

Dear Lloyd
Are you sitting comfortably? Then I'll tell you the tale of The Quest for Cruciality. Once upon a time there lived a fair maiden who did enjoy to bash aliens to bits upon occasion. To read also she did crave, and so to CRASH she didst resubscribe. The maiden wast a vain wench, who to seem most hip 'n'trendy didst magically appear a noble tome upon the door mat. Which whereon she seizest and didst peruse with utmost delight.
Soon her gaze didst alight upon a magical design, in which didst rest four likenesses. One likeness it didst bear two darkened circles where mayhap lay its eyes.
'Oh wow!', didst cry ye faire maiden, 'How cool 'n' froody be they'!
Straight away prepare didst she for a quest of mighty length. Though abandon must her trusty joystick (she doth it trust not to work), her bard's manuscript 'So', and her Stephen Donaldson fables, she doth grit her teeth and mount her trusty steed (this sprinter she doth trust to be late by full half one hour of day).
Across the plain she didst speed, and espiest wast she by an evil giant, 'Hey nonny nonny!' didst cry ye giant, 'How 'mazing hip 'n'trendy she be', and in his great surprise didst let fall ye soil from ye olde spade which carrying he hadst been, so he blocketh her retreat with a hill of steep sides.
Bat an eyelid she didst not, so cool wast she. On she didst speed on her steed, until at length didst she attain ye olde town of Scropesbury. There she didst search both high and low, within every nook and cranny, for to see if these so hip 'n'trendy magical glass circles were therein concealed.
In vain wast her search.

'A lack', she bewaited, 'Oh wae is me,
How mayst I so trendy be
When I hath not ye ultimate accessory?
Where findeth one glasses like to Steve's?
If I don't get some I'll be peeved!'

FIN

The moral of this story is
That if your aim so trendy tis
Never go out without dark glasses
Even if a cloud it passes.

(Answer would be appreciated, even if a mite belated . . .)
Vicky White, Shropshire
PS. Yes, I know my poetry is awful.

Answer? What was the question, Vicky?
LM

GET BETTER OR BEWARE!

Dear Lloyd
Apologies due to the CRASH reviewing team whom I criticised in my letter, published in Issue 51. I stated that I was unhappy with the reviewing standards in Issue 49. I have to admit that *Rampage* is rather repetitive and therefore boring, and *Scruples* is only 'pas mal'.
On to the real point of my letter – i.e., software standards. Ocean have put the 'bad old days' behind them, and thankfully have moved it to pastures new – good software. *Combat School, Match Day II, Platoon* and *Firefly* have been released since Christmas, and all have been first class.
Hewson are, without doubt, the most consistent software house. *Cybernoid – The Fighting Machine* is perfection personified. Graphically superb, superlative sound and playability, and magnificent animation. If every game was as good as *Cybernoid*, then the world would be a better place.
GO! have stalled, after a promising start; *Trantor* has been the silver lining to the cloud. Unfortunately, GO! got the licence to produce Capcom arcade games. The licence could have



been put to better use by a company who worry about quality not quantity.

US Gold are consistent, but bad. Although saying that, to every rule there are exceptions – *Out Run* and *World Class Leaderboard* are examples of good US Gold games .

Every software company has, at one time, churned out a product saying to themselves 'This game is crap, but we'll con the public into buying it'. This has got to be stopped. Only the software-buying public can do this. Flooding the company's office with complaint letters, or even boycotting their software until a promise of quality comes from the company, are ways of doing this.

Hewson and Ocean have led the pack for so long now, it is time for other companies to try and regain the lead!

Scott McGlashan, Glasgow

*Congratulations are certainly due to Hewson and Ocean, but let's try and forget the past and look forward to the future. US Gold insist that their product is consistently improving (and after looking at one of their assessment sheets I must say they are trying VERY hard); GO!, on the other hand, seem to have reached a satisfactory standard now (*Bionic Commando *is great fun), I can't wait for* The Great Giana Sisters. *Compared to four years ago the software scene is much better, with a larger range of ideas, a higher quality of product AND (on average and forgetting the new budget boom) only £1 per game more! But, as Mrs Mangram always says, there's always room for improvement.*

LM

FRENCH EXCHANGE

Dear Lloyd

Recently I spent ten days in France, staying with a French family as part of my A-level studies. I met several people of my own age, most of whom had some sort of computer. Surprisingly, I found that the Spectrum was quite well-known. It seems that French computers often represent a better package hardware-wise – everyone assumed I had a 128K (which is true), and could not comprehend the idea of a mere 48K RAM – but the standard of programming is way behind Britain's. They also nearly died when I said I used a cassette player to load programs.

Finally, a point for you personally. You remember you were talking about synchronicity in your Christmas History? Well, it was happening to me while reading CRASH. Now come on, own up – which one of you has a penchant for using the word 'eponymous'? It must have come up about seventy three times in four months!!

Finally (yes, I know I said 'finally' last time but I've just thought of something else), I might as well shove in my oar on the 8-bit/16-bit debate. It seems to me that nearly all 16-bit games at the moment are mutton dressed as lamb, crummy 'Pong' clones that look like classical paintings (OK, so I exaggerated). I've even played one game where the sound was digitised onto an Amiga from a SPECTRUM! Shumthing wrong, shurely . . .

Congratulations on your fifty issues.

John A Swan, Gillingham, Kent

I'm surprised that they knew about the Spectrum – there's hardly any in France. Programming standards in France are rapidly rising; software houses like Loriciels, Infogrames and Titus are now familiar names in the UK software market. Regarding the tape recorder: the only reason we have slow cassette players is to allow us time to enjoy a pleasant cup of afternoon tea with mother.

LM

Well that's it for now. I'm off to book my coach trip down to Bournemouth. Ed says I can have three (!) days off this year (so long as it includes a Saturday and a Sunday – Ed). So with any luck I'll be back next month with a fresh and revitalised Forum (and slightly tanned, if the colour of this page is anything to go by). In the meantime why not drop me a postcard from your holiday haven – I'd send you all one but I don't know where you're going . . . So if you've anything to say for yourself (or anyone else) drop me a line; as always it's LLOYD MANGRAM, CRASH FORUM, *PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB*. You could find yourself the lucky recipient of a £30 software voucher! But then again who cares about the money, it's the fame I love!

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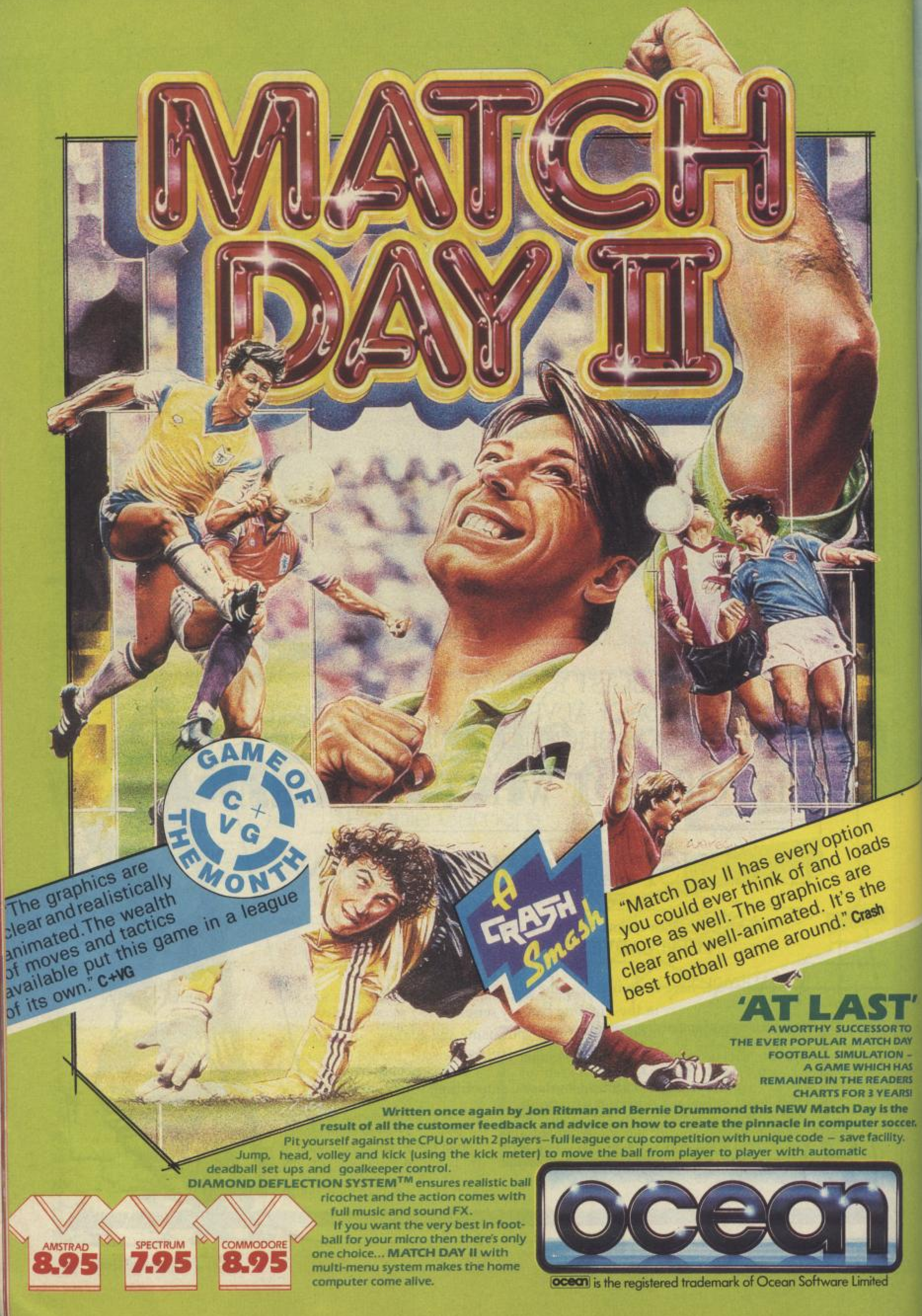
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Nick Roberts's

PLAYING TIPS



Ah, summer bliss. Or if you live in a small market town on the border of Wales, summer **TOURIST INVASION!** Yes, it's the time of year when your movements are restricted to a couple of centimetres every minute. It usually takes me half an hour to get to Victoria Wine (get a few cans of cherry cola) and back – and they're only downstairs! But enough of my problems. As you can see, the tips this month are somewhat overrun with the name *Cybernoid*. You may think I'm a bit late with tips for Raf Cecco's masterpiece, but the only reason I've kept them back is the map competition I ran in Issue 51. Now Nick Roberts (that's me) can proudly present The Ultimate Playing Tips for The Ultimate Fighting Machine. All the competition entries were so good I had to get a second opinion on who should win, then a third . . . Besides that I also have more Cheat Mode Motel plus loads of POKEs and tips.

YABBA DABBA DOO

What's this I see? Could it be a great solution for *The Flintstones* **from** Jamie Hendley**? Yes, it sure is! Now you'll have no problem catching Pebbles (cor, I love all her songs!).**

Painting The Wall

First of all paint the top of the wall. If Pebbles starts drawing on the bottom just leave her to get on with it. The start on the bottom. Leave Pebbles and just keep painting. You should, eventually, complete the stage.

Driving To The Bowling Alley

Go fast till you come to the first bump, then slam the anchors on and ride over the bump. Speed up and jump over the next rock. Carry on at full steam till the next lot of bumpy rocks. When you meet them jump continuously to the end – you should get there in time.

Bowling Alley

Just play bowls with Barney Rubble. It does get boring but you'll just have to put up with it.

The Rescue

Just get up as far as possible. Then go right and get the workman's hat. Go left as far as possible, jump on to the rope and slide to the bottom. Grab Pebbles, go back up the rope, jump off trying to make the wind push you and go right till you come to the hole. Jump to the second platform and drop off. Go back down the lift, walk right off the lift and you have completed the game. I wonder what movie they've got on at the drive-in?

THE RACE AGAINST TIME

What we have here is a list of the objects used in ***The Race Against Time*****, the new game from those crazy guys at Code Masters promoting Sport Aid 88. They've all been sent in by** Mic Bray **and** Marc Doody**. In fact, they're so good I think I'll give the duo £30 worth of software for this month's best playing tip.**

TIMELY TIPS

☆Nothing is used or found in S America.
☆To enter the African temple: drop the SPHINX at the doorway, and an arrow should appear.
☆To plug the European hole in the wall: get the UMBRELLA, fly to Europe, go under the hole where the water comes out and drop the UMBRELLA. Enter the cave and get the plug then return to the hole in the wall. Jump on the hill, press fire and the water will stop.
☆To get past the large stone in the pyramid: enter pyramid, go far right and jump. The stone above you will rise then go left past the stone.
☆To get past the elephant in Africa: drop the CHEESE next to the elephant. A mouse will appear and scare off the elephant.

ITEM	FOUND IN:	USED IN:	USE:	FLY TO LOCATION AND . . .
Spanner	Asia	Europe	Stop fountain	Go left till you find the first arrow, go down then go left
Herring	Africa	Europe	Feed cat in cave	Try and find the wood, go right, move elephant by getting mouse and go right
Coat	Africa	Asia	Pass snow storm	Go to the place with lots of arrows. Try and find the wood and go right
Ice Pick	Africa	N America	Release ice	Enter the temple
Head Dress	Africa	Africa	Pass sand storm	Jump up on the right side. When you are in the pyramid, the stone should rise, then go left
Sand Bag	NAmerica	Africa	Move stone in temple	Go down the arrow on the far right, go right
Stool	NAmerica	Asia	Stand on near wall	Go down the arrow on the far right, go left
Sphinx	NAmerica	Africa	Open temple	Go down arrow on far left. Now go left, use the AXE to cut down tree, go as far left as you can. The SPHINX is at the base of the tree
Umbrella	Australia	Europe	Pass rain storm and water coming from wall	Go right
Cheese	Europe	Africa	Move elephant	Plug water. The cheese is on the hill
Plug	Europe	Europe	Plug wall	Enter the cave
Axe	Europe	N America	Cut down tree	The axe is past the tap
Salt	Europe	Australia	Get over river	Go right, past the rain storm

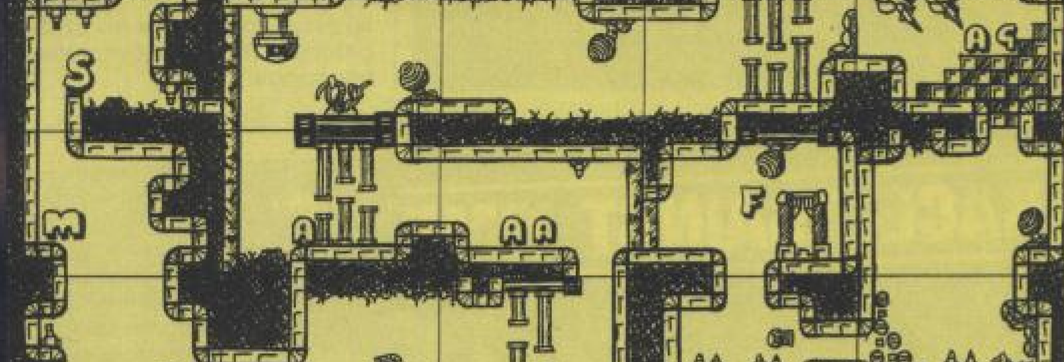
CYBERNOID

The winner of the mapping competition is the tremendously talented Peter Stavers of Sunderland. He receives £30 worth of software and a great *Cybernoid* sweatshirt. The four runners-up, who each receive a great sweatshirt, are Simon 'Microkid' Salwan of Hamdean; Neil Stone from Cwmbran; Guy Keough of Blackburn and Darren Freeman from Ashington. Well done to all the entrants, it was really hard to choose between all that brilliant art.

KEY

A – Ammunition
M – Mine
G – Gun
S – Start
F – Finish

LEVEL 1



LEVEL 2



The Ultimate Fighting Machine SPECIAL



LEVEL 3



CYBERNOID

The Ultimate Fighting Machine SPECIAL

Here, to go along with that brilliant *Cybernoid* map, is the complete screen by screen guide to the game by a mysteriously anonymous person from *51 Farm Fields Close, Sheffield.* Each description lists the objects on the screen, followed by an easy solution. If no exit point is given it is not critical where you exit. On all the screens containing aliens you should fire constantly (but I think you've probably gathered that already).

LEVEL ONE

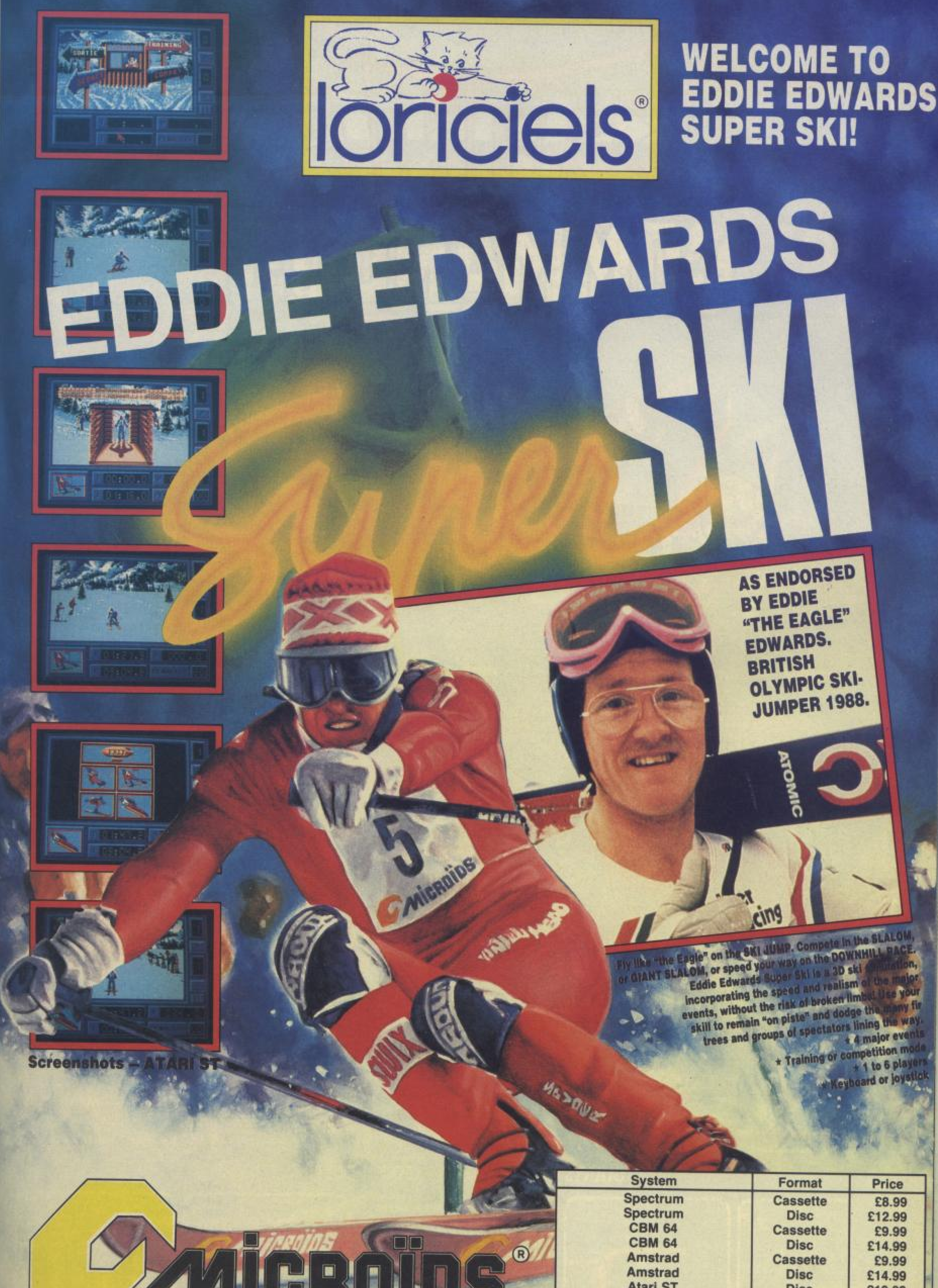
1 *(volcano)* Exit at far bottom left.
2 *(aliens, mace)* Drop down the far left, firing constantly until you pick up the mace. Pick up any cargo dropped by the aliens. Exit left of centre.
3 *(beehive gun)* Drop a bomb immediately to the right. Exit as far up on the right as possible.
4 *(two missiles, indestructible gun)* Move across the screen till the red bullets start coming. If you can make it all the way across before they come then great, but if you can't then duck down into the holes in the pipeline. Smash the two missiles with the mace.
5 *(pipeline with aliens)* Position yourself on the left pipeline so that you are exactly square on. As soon as the top alien hits the roof go in between them. Move down with the aliens and exit out of the hole.
6 *(aliens, two extra weapons, missile)* Fire a BOUNCE as soon as you enter and rise, firing constantly. Continue firing and collect any cargo that may drop. Exit the screen as soon as possible as it can get very hectic.
7 *(two pipelines, extra weapon, volcano)* Switch to SHIELD and activate it as soon as you enter the pipeline. Fly through the pipes but be sure to pick up a new SHIELD on the other side. Switch to SEEKER and exit at top right.
8 *(beehive gun, plant, indestructible gun)* Fire a SEEKER immediately and fly up right. The mace will destroy the plant. If you have lost the mace then either use another SEEKER or a BOMB. Stay on the SEEKER for the next screen, but be ready to switch to BOUNCE.
9 *(beehive gun, aliens)* Fire a SEEKER and switch to BOUNCE. Move right whilst firing. Use the BOUNCE when the screen fills with aliens. Keep on firing and collecting cargo till your cargo points total over 1500.
10 *(two pipelines, caterpillar)* Fly to the tubes and switch to SHIELD. Activate it and fly through exiting top right.
11 *(two large guns, rear laser, bricks, extra weapon)* The guns don't fire so just destroy them for points. Collect SHIELD as extra weapon. Collect the rear laser gun and blow away the bricks. Switch to SEEKER for the next screen.
12 *(aliens, beehive gun)* Fire SEEKER and exit bottom left. Keep firing.
13 *(two missiles, plant, caterpillar, bricks)* Use the mace or BOMBS to destroy the missiles and the plant. Watch out for the caterpillar as you cannot kill it. Shoot all the bricks and exit.
14 *(five missiles, caterpillar)* If you still have the mace then use it to destroy all the missiles, if not use BOMBS. Change to SEEKERS.
15 *(beehive gun, level lift)* Fire a SEEKER and move left to dodge anything nasty that the beehive might have shot. Land on the end of level lift.

LEVEL TWO

16 *(extra weapon, five missiles, plant)* Just use BOMBS here to kill everything on the screen. Exit along the bottom of the screen, select BOUNCE.
17 *(extra weapon, indestructible gun, bricks)* Shoot away a couple of bricks at the bottom of the pile and collect the new weapon. Fire a BOUNCE and exit.
18 *(rear laser, aliens)* Keep shooting left as you go down. Collect the rear laser and come up on the left, continuously firing.
19 *(mace, caterpillar, plant)* Dodge the caterpillar by going down into the pipes till it goes overhead. DON'T collect the mace as it spoils plans for the next screen! Select BOUNCE, exit right.
20 *(beehive gun, three missiles, two plants)* If you have a mace it will destroy the first plant leaving you open to fire from the beehive gun. If this happens, launch a BOUNCE and dodge them. If it doesn't then BOUNCE till the gun has been destroyed.
21 *(three pipes)* Select SHIELD but don't use it. Go through the first pipe as on Screen 5 and just as you enter the second, activate the SHIELD.
22 *(aliens)* BOUNCE upon entry and drop quickly, firing all the time. Select SEEKER.
23 *(beehive gun, two plants)* Fire the SEEKER. Select BOUNCE if you don't have the mace, otherwise use SHIELD.
24 *(plant, aliens, extra weapon, rear laser)* If you selected BOUNCE then use it once, select SHIELD. Now collect the extra weapon to regain your SHIELD and pick up the rear laser. Select SEEKER and exit centre right.
25 *(beehive gun, indestructible gun, four missiles, plant)* Fire two SEEKERS immediately. The first will hit the plant and the second the gun. Be prepared for the gun to fire at you. BOMBS can now be used to destroy the missiles, or a BOUNCE.
26 *(indestructible gun)* Dodge the bullets using the gaps in the pipeline, as in Screen 4. Exit as far left as possible. Select BOMBS.
27 *(indestructible gun, rear laser, extra weapons, bricks)* Destroy all the bricks using laser and BOMBS. Collect the rear laser. Collect the weapons in this order: BOUNCE, SHIELD, SEEKER, BOMBS, MINES. For example, if you have five BOUNCE and one SHIELD, select SEEKER before collecting the first weapon. Select BOUNCE and exit top left.
28 *(caterpillar, bricks)* Go right slightly and fire a BOUNCE. If it is fired correctly the four bricks will be destroyed and the caterpillar will go around the central block. Follow it round anti-clockwise and exit at the top.
29 *(caterpillar, two segments, bricks)* Go up left to the pipeline and wait for the caterpillar to pass overhead. Move up when it has gone and whilst doing so, select BOUNCE.
30 *(aliens)* Move out of the tunnel and fire the BOUNCE. Drop down, dodging and firing. Select SEEKER and exit.
31 *(bricks, beehive gun, aliens)* Fire a SEEKER and then BOMB or BOUNCE your way through the bricks. Select SEEKER again and drop down the left side.
32 *(beehive gun, plants)* Fire a SEEKER and drop down. Exit left and select SHIELD.
33 *(indestructible gun, six missiles, two extra weapon)* Activate SHIELD and collect extra weapons. Exit quickly at the bottom.
34 *(plant, mace, rear laser, blocks, two extra weapon)* Collect everything. Select your most needed weapon.
35 *(indestructible gun, six extra weapons)* Dodge the bullets and pick up any weapons you need.
36 *(five missiles, aliens, plant)* BOUNCE and pick up any cargo you may need by firing as you cross the screen.
37 *(aliens, mace)* Enter the pipes and BOUNCE about half way down. This gives you some protection from the aliens.
38 *(end of level lift, four missiles)* Destroy the missiles using anything you have handy. Complete the level.

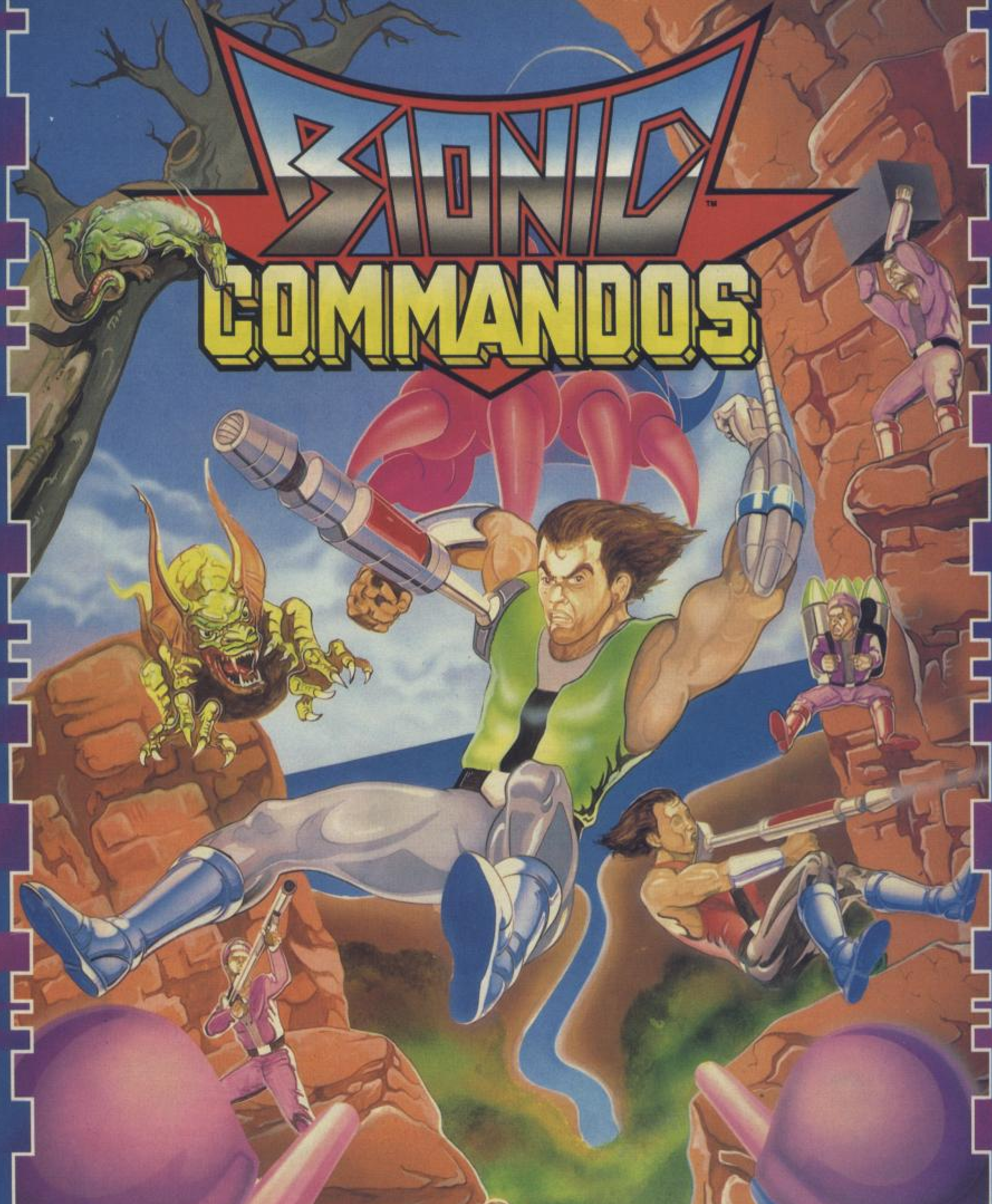
LEVEL THREE

39 *(eight missiles, mace)* This screen is no problem, but be sure to pick up the mace and select SHIELD for the next screen.
40 *(indestructible gun, three missiles, beehive gun)* Activate SHIELD and kill the beehive gun with the mace. Exit quickly with SEEKER selected.
41 *(aliens, plant, beehive gun)* Fire the SEEKER and exit.
42 *(three missiles, aliens, extra weapon, rear laser, mace)* Fire a BOUNCE to help with the alien and missile onslaught and pick up the weapons. Exit far right.
43 *(indestructible gun, four extra weapons, bricks, blocked pipeline)* Collect all the weapons and land on top of the blocked pipe. Fire a BOMB to destroy some of the blockage. Drop down to where the block was and fire two shots. Sprint to the end of the screen and keep going.
44 *(caterpillar, two missiles)* Move left instantly then move up. Select SEEKER.
45 *(beehive gun, plant, aliens)* Fire a SEEKER and keep firing constantly as you exit left. Select BOUNCE.
46 *(four missiles, two large guns, aliens)* Fire a BOUNCE to eliminate most threats and BOUNCE up and down to the right, firing.
47 *(four blocked pipelines)* Treat these as normal pipelines but fire constantly as you drop and rise. They should present no problem.
48 *(two plants, aliens)* This screen is (again!) no problem. BOUNCE if needed and exit left of centre.
49 *(beehive gun, aliens)* Launch a SEEKER. Take your time leaving the safe spot at the bottom. When you do rise be careful not to get killed near the top.
50 *(beehive gun, aliens)* Fire another SEEKER followed by a BOUNCE. Beware, these aliens fire many bullets! Exit bottom left, carefully.
51 *(aliens, mace, rear laser)* BOUNCE and travel along the bottom of the screen collecting everything there. The mace should be enough cover to avoid being dive bombed. Select SEEKER or BOUNCE.
52 *(beehive gun, two missiles, aliens)* Fire a SEEKER or BOUNCE quickly. Follow it with a(nother) BOUNCE to eliminate the aliens.
53 *(caterpillar, two missiles, bricks)* Don't fire a BOUNCE, as the caterpillar may do funny things and kill you. Fly over the missiles high enough for them to miss you. Shoot the bricks and bomb the bottom two.
54 *(plant)* Treat the pipeline as normal, use the mace to kill the plant (if you have it). If you don't have it, use a BOMB, select SHIELD.
55 *(caterpillar, indestructible gun)* Use the SHIELD to avoid the bullets and caterpillar.
56 *(aliens)* BOUNCE if you need to and exit bottom left. The aliens shouldn't be too much of a problem.
57 *(six missiles, bricks, beehive gun)* You have plenty of time here so move left and right till all the missiles have been destroyed. Now launch a SEEKER and destroy all the bricks by using a BOUNCE or some BOMBs. Select BOUNCE for the next screen.
58 *(plant, beehive gun, seven missiles, aliens)* Fire a BOUNCE and go close to the plant or missiles for shelter from the beehive gun's bombardment. Now rise, firing and killing the aliens as you move right.
59 *(aliens)* No problem if the aliens are easy. Launch a BOUNCE for luck, though, and there should be no problem. Make sure you pick up a mace and select SEEKER for the next screen.
60 *(three beehive guns)* Launch two SEEKERs and kill the final beehive gun with the mace. Select BOUNCE and exit top right.
61 *(aliens, seven missiles)* Launch the BOUNCE straight away and dodge your way to the top of the screen. Exit here at the far right.



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The Ultimate Fighting Machine SPECIAL

62 *(eight missiles, mace, rear laser, extra weapon)* If you left at the correct point on the last screen you will be able to travel from right to left and let the missiles launch themselves harmlessly. Then rise to collect the weapons. Select SHIELD if you have one or SEEKER if not.

63 *(beehive gun, missile, aliens)* Fire your selected weapon and follow it up with a BOUNCE. Get to the bottom as quickly as possible. Keep BOUNCE selected.

64 *(aliens, bricks)* Launch a BOUNCE to remove the bricks and help kill the aliens. Exit bottom left.

65 *(aliens, two plants)* BOMB the plants and move right. Because of the overhanging platform, half the aliens won't get to you. If you fire constantly you shouldn't get killed.

66 *(bricks, indestructible gun)* Destroy the bricks with BOMBS. Remember, the bullets launched by the gun can travel faster than you!

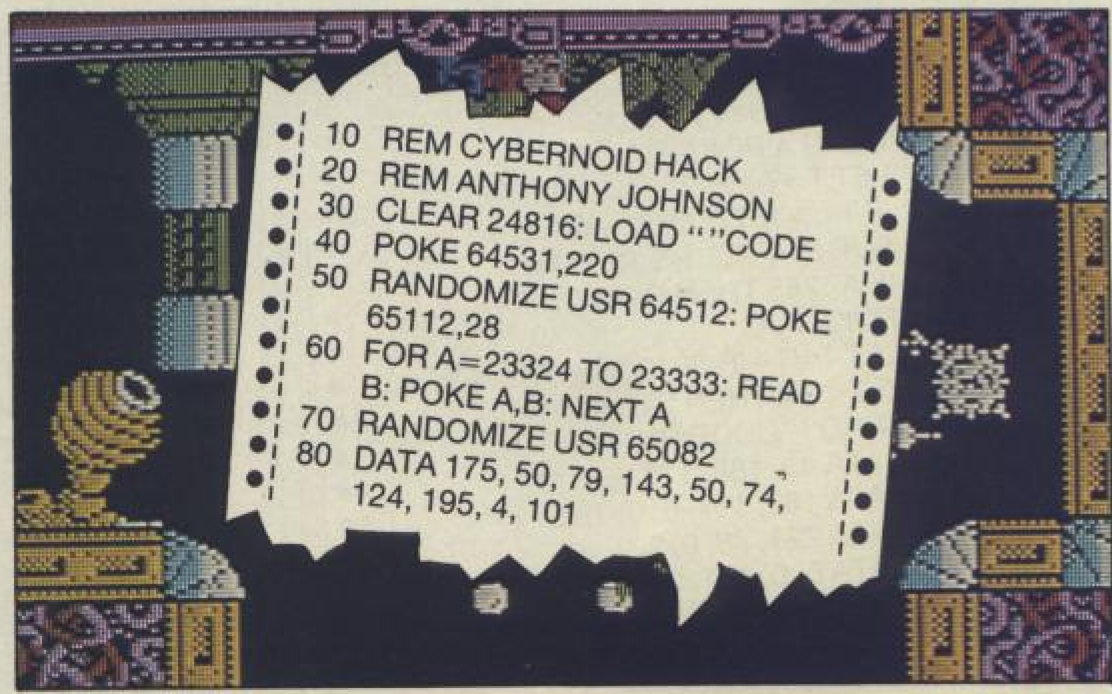
67 *(indestructible gun, volcano)* Quickly drop into the first hole. Be careful moving on this screen as the gun's bullets are obscured by the volcano's eruptions. Select SEEKER.

68 *(two beehive guns, aliens)* Fire two SEEKERS immediately and follow them up with a BOUNCE. Because of the narrow left side of the screen caution must be used in all movements, especially after the two guns have been destroyed. This is because the explosions obscure aliens and bullets.

69 *(six missiles, mace, rear laser, aliens, six plants)* Collect the mace to destroy the missiles and then collect the rear laser. Launch a BOUNCE and fly up.

70 *(level lift)* This is the final screen (hooray!). The pipelines should be treated as in Screen 47. Land on the lift to go back to Level One.

Or if you're a real cheat then the alternative is to use this POKE for infinite lives and fire power from Anthony Johnson **in London.**



```
10 REM CYBERNOID HACK
20 REM ANTHONY JOHNSON
30 CLEAR 24816: LOAD ""CODE
40 POKE 64531,220
50 RANDOMIZE USR 64512: POKE
   65112,28
60 FOR A=23324 TO 23333: READ
   B: POKE A,B: NEXT A
70 RANDOMIZE USR 65082
80 DATA 175, 50, 79, 143, 50, 74,
   124, 195, 4, 101
```

CHEAT MODE MOTEL

Gosh, here we are again with another Cheat Mode Motel. This section of Playing Tips has had quite a few inquiries recently. Loads of people trying to get in to one of our many posh suites. Half of the people who write to me seem to worship the section along with Flashback. And the other half, well, they don't know what's good for them, do they? Anyway here's this month's collection of connoisseurs . . .

ROLLING THUNDER (AGAIN!)

To change the colours of the sprites and the backgrounds hold down the INVERSE key and 1. Then press keys 4 and 5 to change the colours. This should be done AFTER typing in the cheat mode in Issue 52 (typing JIMBO on the title screen).

You can also fly if you press I when you jump.

(occupants: **Jason McEchatton** and **Edward Swift**)

TAPPITY TAP

I don't know whether this will work but you can try it if you like! You will need two autofire joysticks, and two joystick ports on your computer. Load up any game that requires you to press left and right quickly (like *Combat School* or *Hypersports*) and redefine the left and right keys as the two fire buttons on the joysticks. Now when you have to go 'tappity tap' you can press the autofires and you should zoom along.

(occupant: **Ian 'blame me if it doesn't work' Williams**)

MUGSY

To get $10000000 just enter '88888888' (eight eights) when the Syndicate asks you how many customers you want to buy.

(occupant: **Paul Jones**)

JACK THE NIPPER

When you are near a cat, parp the horn and it flies up to the ceiling. Someone will now chase you but if you get out of that room quickly and then return they will have ceased their frantic actions, but the cat will still be doing his bat impressions.

If you now parp where the cat was your naughtiness will rise. Continue doing this till you have 100% naughtiness.

(occupant: **Paul Jolly**)

IT'S BUGGY BOY TIME

I haven't been able to test this POKE from Ian Crome **in Norfolk because I only have the 128K +3 version on the game (for which I've put in a Multiface poke as well), but you can try it if you like. It gives infinite time on the 48K version of the game, hopefully!**

```
5  REM BUGGY BOY POKE
6  REM MULTIFACERS POKE 39086,0
   (48K); POKE 37973,0 (128K)
10 LOAD ""CODE
20 FOR N=63535 TO 63541: READ A:
   POKE N,A: NEXT N
30 RANDOMIZE USR 63488
40 DATA 175,50,174,152,195,0,128
```

SPEEDLOCK III HACKER

Last time I printed a multihacker routine it went drastically wrong, if you don't know what I mean just look at Issue 47, page 57! But the man behind all these routines, Jon North, has assured me that his new Speedlock III hacker works perfectly. This new routine works on speedlock games that load with multicoloured borders and beeps.

```
5 REM SPEEDLOCK III BY JON NORTH
10 CLEAR 45e3:LET T=0
20 FOR F=3e4 TO 30139
30 READ A:POKE F,A
40 LET T=T+(F-29990) * A:NEXT F
50 IF T<>1077568 THEN STOP
60 FOR F=F TO 1s9:READ A
70 IF A<>255 THEN GOTO 100
80 POKE F,A
90 LET T=T+(F-30130) * A:NEXT F
100 IF T<>A THEN STOP
110 LOAD""CODE:RUN USR 3e4
120 DATA 42, 188, 117, 221, 33
130 DATA 182, 117, 6, 6, 197
140 DATA 221, 78, 0, 221, 35
150 DATA 6, 0, 197, 229, 17
160 DATA 20, 116, 237, 176, 33
170 DATA 49, 116, 126, 254, 249
180 DATA 32, 2, 54, 0, 33
190 DATA 36, 116, 126, 254, 249
200 DATA 32, 2, 54, 0, 235
210 DATA 54, 201, 205, 20, 116
220 DATA 225, 193, 9, 193, 16
230 DATA 209, 42, 188, 117, 1
240 DATA 112, 11, 9, 1, 100
250 DATA 0, 62, 243, 237, 177
260 DATA 43, 1, 0, 4, 237
270 DATA 66, 17, 169, 250, 1
280 DATA 0, 6, 237, 176, 33
290 DATA 150, 117, 34, 195, 254
300 DATA 195, 169, 254, 1, 96
310 DATA 54, 82, 50, 17, 14
320 DATA 12, 24, 205, 28, 254
330 DATA 33, 38, 255, 1, 100
340 DATA 0, 62, 217, 237, 177
350 DATA 54, 72, 54, 72, 43
360 DATA 54, 0, 33, 190, 117
370 DATA 17, 217, 254, 1, 40
380 DATA 0, 237, 176, 201, 17
390 DATA 36, 57, 14, 25, 23
```

Now here are some data lines to go along with the main piece of code.

OUT RUN (Infinite time)

```
400 DATA 19, 223, 33, 175, 158, 53, 195,
    0, 72, 1090305
```

GRYZOR (Infinite lives)

```
400 DATA 60, 222, 62, 64, 50, 14, 91, 33,
    236, 254, 17, 0, 64, 1, 20, 0, 237, 176,
    195, 0, 72, 33, 9, 64, 34, 24, 254, 195,
    0, 254, 175, 50, 103, 136, 195, 0, 128,
    1180348
```

SUPER HANG ON I (Infinite time)

```
400 DATA 96, 224, 33, 231, 254, 17, 12,
    91, 1, 35, 0, 237, 176, 195, 0, 72, 33,
    33, 175, 34, 74, 193, 33, 54, 9, 34, 77,
    193, 175, 50, 79, 193, 195, 240, 235,
    1184366
```

SUPER HANG ON II (Infinite time)

```
400 DATA 96, 224, 33, 33, 216, 34, 39,
    188, 33, 54, 9, 34, 42, 188, 175, 50, 44,
    188, 195, 0, 72, 1116223
```

BEYOND THE ICE PALACE

These are the official Elite tips for this brilliant game. Watch out for a fantastic map coming your way soon – exclusive to CRASH Playing Tips.

1. Always try to use the swords as they are usually the best weapons.
2. Use the mace ball to kill enemies which are on the platform above.
3. Summon spirits carefully as there are only a small number to be found, also, you can only carry two at a time so don't pick up any more than two.
4. If you pick up a poor weapon, such as a dagger, try back tracking to find a more powerful weapon.
5. Be a man, stand and fight the baddies, don't run away as they'll keep following you anyway. The larger nasties will take some frantic shooting to destroy.
6. Watch your head for enemies when you climb up ladders.
7. Take your time - don't run ahead blindly as you'll soon be surrounded.
8. Dodge enemies' weapons by jumping or ducking them.
9. Watch out for sneaky bats on moving platforms - be prepared to summon a spirit quickly. It'll only work when above baddies.
10. Good luck!

Before I sign off this month I'd just like to say NO MORE TARGET RENEGADE CHEATS, please. My postbag has been overrun with the things, people like Chris Bainbridge have been on the phone with them and I've even had them handed to me in the street by the likes of Karl Chandler and Daniel Bufton. But what I would like are some POKEs on *VENOM Strikes Back*, *The Race Against Time*, *Beyond The Ice Palace* and any other popular game that tickles your fancy. Send all your POKEs, tips and maps, as usual, to . . . MR BIG, NICK ROBERTS'S PLAYING TIPS, CRASH, *PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB*

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In the knife-edge world of the vigilante there is no place to rest, no time to think – but look sharp – there is always time to die! You will encounter the disciples of evil who's mission it is to exterminate the only man on earth who dares to throw down the guantlet in their path – the Renegade. PLAY RENEGADE...PLAY MEAN!
Licensed from © Taito Corp., 1986.
IK+
They called International Karate 'the greatest Karate beat 'em up yet' (Commodore User). And who are we to argue? But ARCHER MACLEAN has come up with a stunner: A third fighter. An amazing animated background. New moves (including double head-kick and a spectacular backflip). Re-mixed music by ROB HUBBARD. And balls!
©1987 Archer Maclean ©1987 System 3 Software Ltd.
SUPER SPRINT
Licensed from Atari Games' original money-spinning coin-op, one or two players compete head-to-head over eight gruelling tracks and four levels of game difficulty. Avoid the hazards and collect golden spanners to enhance custom car features – the key to Super Sprint. With detailed animation and sound effects, Super Sprint brings the best driving excitement ever to be experienced on home computers.
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RAMPAGE
The game where the nice guys don't get a look in. Grab your way through Chicago, punch up New York, and jump on San Francisco. Three indescribably nasty characters which bear a remarkable likeness to King Kong, Godzilla and Wolf-man, need you to send them on a rampage in an enduring 150 days of destruction, through 50 different cities.
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COMPETITION

JOIN DARTH VADER ON A JOURNEY THROUGH SPACE

NO WIMPS ALLOWED!





THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK soared to success last month with a CRASH Smash rating of 90%. In this exciting sequel to *Star Wars*, the Empire has unleashed hundreds of probots, AT-AT walkers and TIE fighters in a dark and desperate attempt to crush the rebel forces once and for all. Can Luke Skywalker and Han Solo (in the trusty Millenium Falcon) hurtle through the cool, dark sky to victory – yet again.

Be honest? Haven't you always had a sneaking sympathy for the other side. Don't you feel just that touch of disappointment when Darth Vader's forces bite the dust or an Empire ship explodes into a thousand shimmering shards?

Well, just for those of you who've always fancied a walk on the dark side of the force, Domark has arranged a prestigious competition. One earthling CRASH reader, accompanied by a morally supportive friend, has been granted an one-off audience with the Lord of the Sith, Darth Vader, himself. To commemorate this occasion, unprecedented in the history of the galaxy, (and so you can show your mum) a photographer has been granted permission to record the meeting on film.

As if this is not enough (nothing is enough for the dark side of the force) the Lord of the Sith, in his infinite wisdom, has agreed to take you on a journey through the galaxy. At Space Adventure, one of London's newest attractions, the winner and his friend are scheduled to embark on Starship 3001, the latest in computer-controlled aircraft simulator technology (even Domark couldn't afford the Empire's astronomical hire rates). The voyage reaches right across the solar system to Mars. Who knows what hazards and hindrances you might encounter on the way . . .

To be considered as a candidate for this extraordinary opportunity, all you have to do is think up a suitably witty caption to this irreverent photograph of Dominic Wheatley and Mark Strachan (Do and Mark) pummelling an unusually abject Darth Vader into the ground.

Write your entry, along with your name and address, on the back of a postcard (or sealed down envelope, as they say in all the best competitions) and send them off to **I LOVE DARTH VADER COMP, CRASH, *PO BOX 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.***

Entries must be received by August 30 and the decision of the appointed CRASH judges remains final and binding every respect. Or else the force will be upon you!

CECCO'S LOG

Stardate: 1 June 1988

Not only is *Stormlord* (the follow-up to *Exolon*) going full steam ahead, but *Cybernoid II* is also being started – and I thought slave labour had been abolished. (That's what you think buster – Andrew Hewson.) So it looks like this month is going to be . . . to coin a phrase . . . one mean mother.

I have designed some nice graphics for *Stormlord* and without wanting to sound too immodest, I reckon they are pretty good. If everything has gone according to plan there should be a few screen photographs scattered around the page – hope you like 'em.

Stardate: 2 June 1988

I receive a phone call stating that Commodore programmer Nick 'I can do ten programs at once' Jones and I must attend a meeting at Hewson HQ in Abingdon, next Monday. After trying every conceivable excuse, Nick and I eventually have to yield to this highly unreasonable demand. Apparently, the meeting (or perhaps that should be interrogation) is being held so we can discuss *Cybernoid II*, and to enable the marketing people and games critics at Hewson to view the latest developments in *Stormlord*.

No doubt they're going to give me a hard time, as usual – especially that Paul Chamberlain who is to games programmers what Colonel Sanders and Bernard Matthews are to chickens.

Stardate: 3 June 1988

I shall be spending the next few days frantically putting together a demo of *Stormlord*, ready for the dreaded encounter on Monday. The reason for all this hard graft is to convince everybody that I have actually been working (which of course I have).

Stardate: 6 June 1988

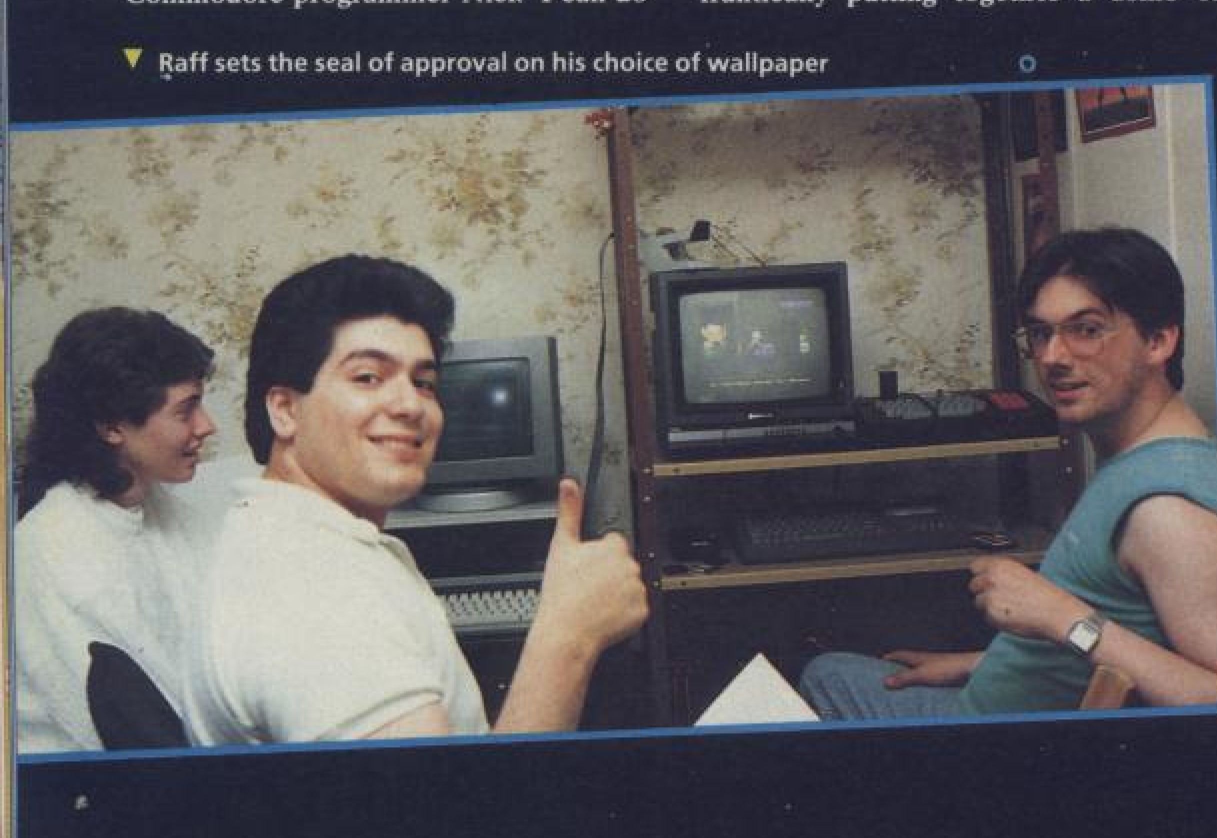
Today Nick and I are making one of our rare visits to Hewson HQ, *'in the heart of rural Oxfordshire'*, as the recruitment ads used to say. Yes, there is not a scene more idyllic and rural than billowing Didcot Power Station and Milton Industrial Estate where Hewson HQ has its roots firmly planted. We are greeted, as usual, by yet another totally new secretary. I think Andrew Hewson employs a new secretary for every new letter that gets typed up. Oh well, variety is the spice of life I suppose.

As usual Andrew has forgotten that Nick and I are popping over and is 'in a meeting' with some other poor chap. I decide to wander off to see if I can pester anybody. The marketing department methinks; they're always good for a laugh. I get chatting to Sandra, the marketing (and definitely NOT PR) person at Hewson, about possible ideas for *Stormlord*'s packaging artwork.

Needless to say, my brilliant idea of having a photograph of yours truly amongst a dozen semi-nude page three girls is rejected without a second hearing – too expensive apparently. (Funny, I don't charge that much.)

When Andrew finally notices that I exist, I am goaded into loading up my *Stormlord* demo. He is duly inspired by the super-smooth scrolling plus the fabulous colourful and lavish graphics (look, be fair, I have to hype the thing somewhere). 'Very sexy', is Andrew's comment (whatever that means). The rest of the meeting is devoted to discussing *Cybernoid II*. Hugh Binns will be designing

▼ Raff sets the seal of approval on his choice of wallpaper



all the graphics for this second *Cybernoid* adventure.

Stardate: 8 June 1988

I feel it is time that *Stormlord* had a main character designed for it. As mentioned last month, animator Nigel Brownjohn is the person to be delegated with this task. At the moment I am using Vitorc, the old *Exolon* character.

Stardate: 12 June 1988

I am finishing off programming the main character movement controller. The way he jumps works quite well because the player can dictate exactly how high he leaps. The higher the leap, the quicker the main character's energy is consumed. I think I'll use a similar idea for the main character's thunderbolt throwing, i.e., bigger and more powerful bolts will use up more of his energy than if he threw small sparks. Different nasties and obstacles will demand varying amounts of the character's energy.

Stardate: 14 June 1988

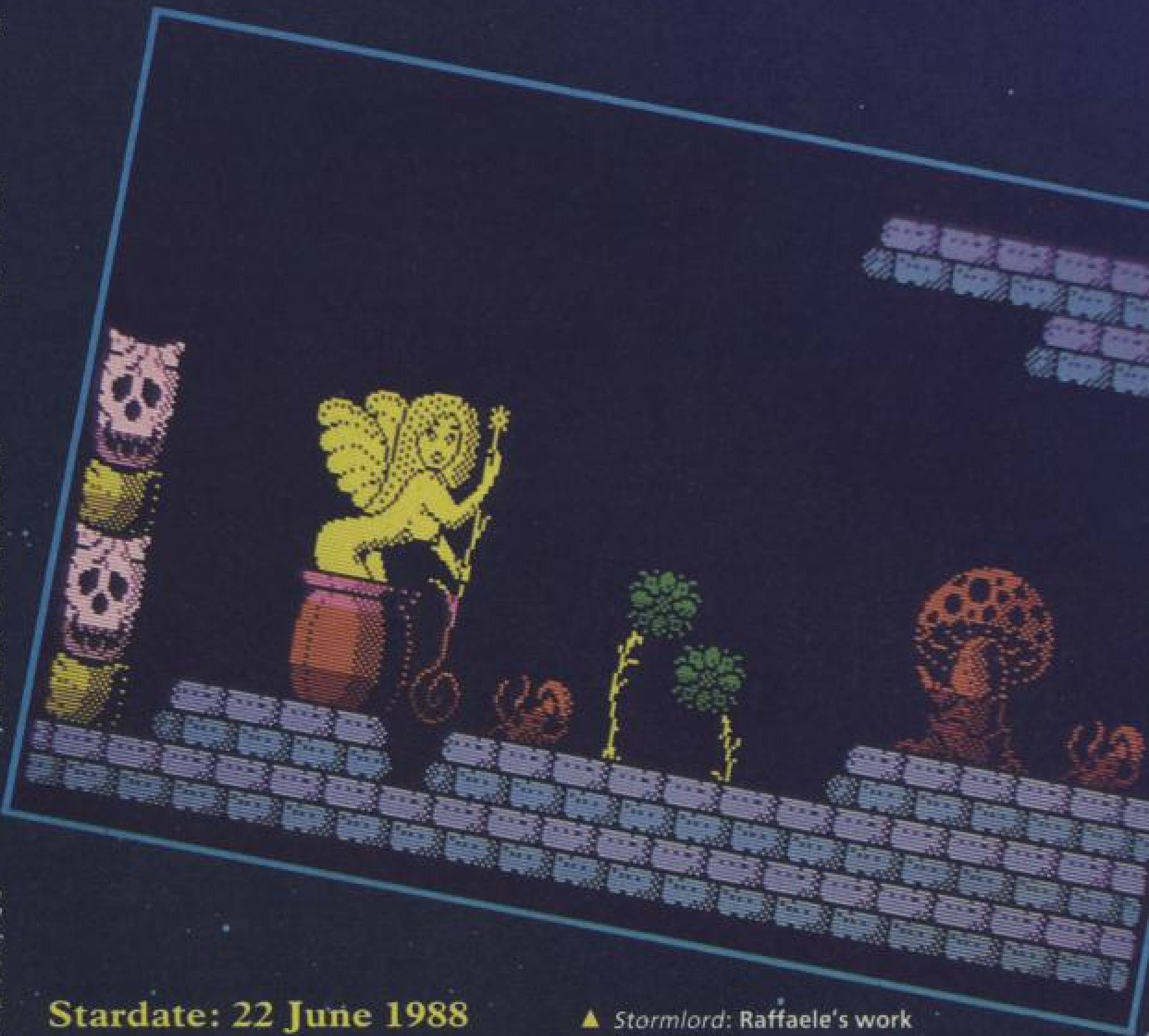
It seems the gang at Hewson HQ want to photograph some screens full of *Stormlord* graphics. In fact I only just got out of having to take the photos myself. Now, I wouldn't say that the people at Hewson expect much from me . . . Oh who cares! Yes I would say that the slave drivers at Hewson expect much too much from me. (Raffaele, I'm sending the boys round – Andrew Hewson.)

Stardate: 18 June 1988

Hugh Binns has come over for the weekend so we can discuss *Cybernoid II* further. Well, that'll take about half an hour. Seriously though, Nick, Hugh and I have come up with several interesting ideas (half of which I was severely tortured into accepting).

Stardate: 19 June 1988

The glorious weather has forced us (totally against our will, I might add) to abandon discussing *Cybernoid II*, and instead we all have a silly day trip to Windsor Safari Park. It's a hard life being a programmer . . .



▲ *Stormlord*: Raffaele's work in progress

Stardate: 22 June 1988

Today is the day that I actually received the main character's animation graphics. Including a nicely designed main character into the program is an inspiring moment – it seems to boost the game's atmosphere immeasurably.

Of course, there are some alterations that I want done (yes I am a fussy so-and-so), and I inform Nigel of these. Overall I think the main dude is pretty splendid – nice one again, Nigel.

Stardate: 23 June 1988

I got up at 4.30 am to incorporate the newly-modified main character – why this second batch of graphics were delivered at such an unearthly time shall remain a secret, because to explain would take forever.

Arrrrghhh . . . !*!$? The whole graphics disk is corrupted! Many glorious yellow and black streaks have totally smothered all the graphics. I am fed up, tired and going back to bed. Good night! A later (much later) phone call reveals that Nigel has actually kept a back-up of all the graphics, so all is not lost – hoorah!

Stardate: 24 June 1988

I can at last incorporate the main character into the program. The first thing that I notice is that he animates just a little too fast. A quick modification to the code soon alleviates this problem. Perfect!



◄ Hot on the trail of the magic mushroom

Stardate: 25 June 1988

I have spent today fiddling with a parallax effect in *Stormlord*'s scrolling, i.e., a pattern of dots that give the illusion that there is a slower scrolling distant background, as well as the main foreground graphics. The effect works well but still needs further development. Whether or not this piece of code will be part of the finished product only time will tell.

Stardate: 26 June 1988

I shall have to close this month's log. (I can say, in all honesty, that I didn't think up the silly Star Trek analogy.) See you around . . .



► Nick Jones and Hugh Binns pop over – for a game of musical chairs

ADVENTURE TRAIL with SAMARA EXTRA



EXCLUSIVE MAGNETIC SCROLLS INTERVIEW

Where does the inspiration for games like *Jinxter* and *The Pawn* come from?

THE BARD'S TALE

City exploration from Electronic Arts

MINDFIGHTER

Survival in post-holocaust Southampton

TIME & MAGIK

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PLUS MORE REVIEWS AND HINTS 'N' TIPS ON ALL YOUR FAVOURITE ADVENTURES!!

MESSAGE IN A MICROCHIP

Since *The Pawn* first took the software industry by storm, Magnetic Scrolls have acquired a reputation for producing first class adventures. Their latest game, *Corruption*, is about to enter the Spectrum's chips. Set in the world of insider dealing, the City and the stockmarket, it marks an interesting departure from their previous fantasy games. Samara, Egyptian adventurer, materialised in their London offices and spoke to Magnetic scribes Ken Gordon and Anita Sinclair.

The beautiful facade of Le Monaco restaurant beckons you to take refuge from the streams of cars and buses which rush past along London Road, swerving dangerously close to the pedestrians as the road turns by the restaurant. The only other place to find some seclusion is in the park over the road to the west.

At a distance of half a mile or so from this upmarket *Corruption* location in the City of London, south of the river between London Bridge and Borough station, lie the offices of Magnetic Scrolls. Nip down a grimy side alley, pass by a hearty-looking London pub, travel up in a rickety, rattling lift and you're there. It's a deceptively low profile for a company that has won practically every adventure accolade going including the prestigious British Micro Computing Game of the Year award for *The Guild of Thieves*.

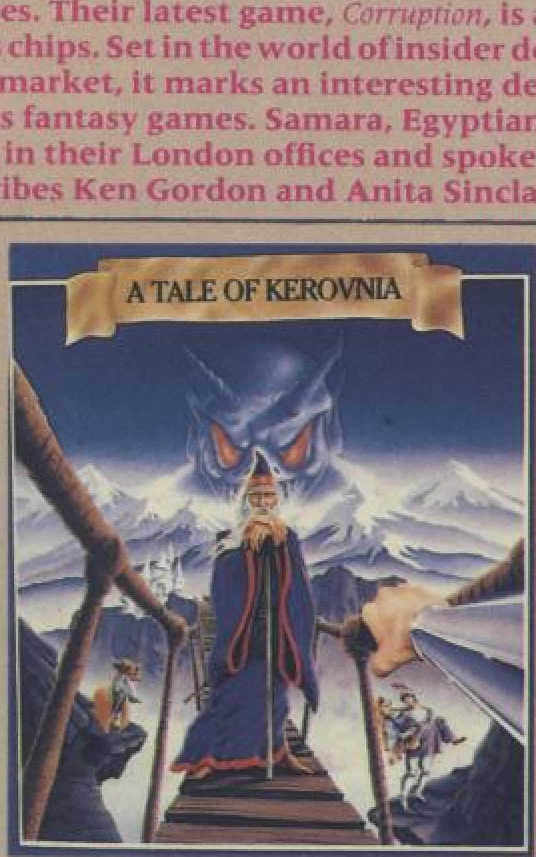
So how did this small but successful company actually start? We spoke to Ken Gordon and Anita Sinclair.

'When the QL came out, that looked like an opportunity for writing new, interesting games. When the ST came along with its added graphics the move was easy because they're both 68000 machines. There was a gap in the market; nobody had got into 16-bit machines so we took the chance.'

They picked adventure rather than arcade games purely as a matter of personal preference. The product of this initial gamble was *The Pawn*. Set in the mythical land of Kerovnia, it was marketed by Rainbird and converted to run on a wide range of 16 and 8-bit formats ranging from IBM PC compatibles to Amstrad CPCs.

Each game takes about a year to develop. All primary work is carried out on a huge DEC Micro Vax linked to a series of individual terminals. With plenty of memory and disk space it's associated with none of the initial problems of working within the restrictions of a smaller machine. Disks don't corrupt and valuable bits of information don't get lost. A couple of programmers work from home on comparatively fast Apricot Xens, but the bulk of the programming takes place on a system which provides more than enough opportunity to experiment.

What amounts to about 80% of a game is written by two people, one specialising in the text and the other in coding but as their work overlaps, neither is a complete specialist.



About two months before a game is due to be released, work starts on the individual versions. A specific format is assigned to each programmer: Ken, for example, has been working on the Amiga version of *Corruption*, Anita Sinclair on the ST. Meanwhile a small army of play-testers and bug-spotters is called into action.

QUALITY CONTROL

The characteristically attractive dark blue packaging is mainly Rainbird's responsibility. They supply all the goodies to go in the box and suggest alterations on the text (usuallysupplied by Magnetic Scrolls) to go into the manuals.

The care that goes into the elaborate peripherals reflects the potential shelf life of each product. Ken Gordon:

'Our idea of a nice product is not necessarily one that's going to make number one in the charts but one that's going to sell for years. We still sell reasonable numbers of *The Pawn*.'

Ken reckons that the games have been successful because of the amount of effort that has been put into them:

'If we don't get something right it (the cause of the bug) will either come out completely or we'll delay things so it is right. We try and produce the most high quality product we can. We aren't in the same business as the people who sell their products at £1.99. It's in the nature of an adventure that, in comparison with top quality arcade products, it has a longer-lasting shelf life.

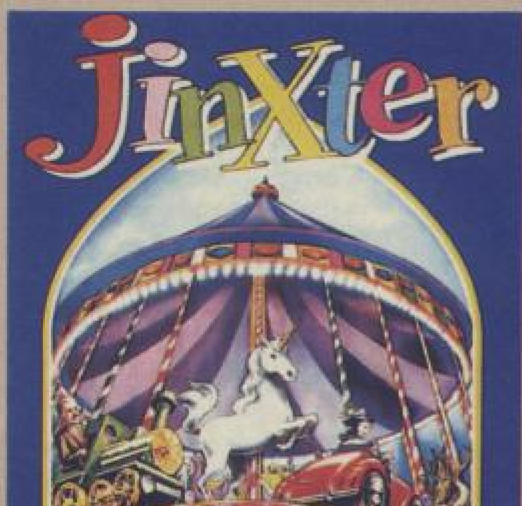
'Adventure games tend not to have as many bells and whistles as, say, a 3-D shoot-'em-up which needs to have features to appeal to the next generation of games players. Adventures don't have the same initial sales figures but new players are still buying comparatively old adventures for the first time.'

GAC-MANIA

Over the years they've developed a whole range of in-house adventure utilities. What do they think of some of the finished systems available on the market now?

'A lot of really good ideas get strangled because a system isn't capable of expressing them. One of the most complex utilities available at the moment lets you have up to 500 flags and 500 counters – you couldn't express one of our games in those terms. Without that extra flexibility, I could see it being very difficult to write a half-reasonable game using one of the adventure writing systems. The ones I've seen, even by people I've expected to do quite well, have been marginal.'

Magnetic Scrolls adventures, on practically every format other than the Spectrum, are well-known for their excellent illustrations. So where does Ken really stand in the great graphics versus text debate?





ADVENTURE TRAIL

GRAPHICALLY SPEAKING

'Graphics take a long time to do and they involve a lot of people, so they really have to add something to a game to be worthwhile. Originally we considered line drawings but we then decided to go for bit pictures. There's fewer of them, but generally they're of a higher quality. *Corruption*, for example is set in the cut-throat environment of the City – it's a dark and sleazy tale and the graphics help to convey this atmosphere. It's one instance where the graphics actually help.

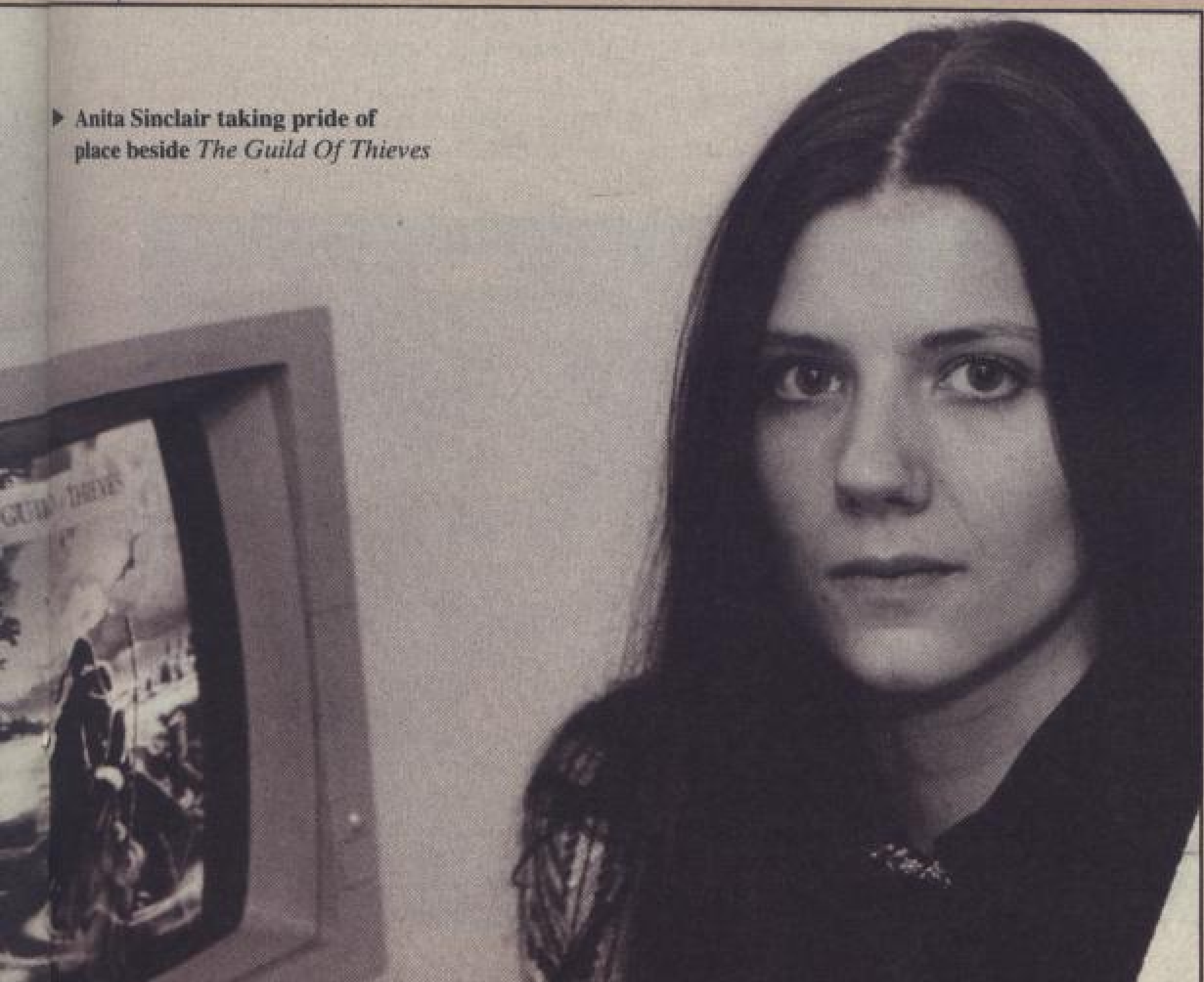
'The trouble is that when a game is being developed we don't work with the pictures; the design is largely coordinated by artists told about the story. They're given descriptions of the rooms so that they make sense, but the illustrations can never be completely accurate. There may be a standard lamp in the picture that isn't in the description. Try and look at it or do something with it and you draw a blank. Our graphics are illustrations really: they're broadly correct but they aren't too literal.

'Having said all that, I don't mind playing games without graphics. If the graphics are really detrimental to the rest of the game then I'll switch them off. In some cases this even speeds up a game which is all for the better.'

The comparatively poor graphics capabilities of the Spectrum weigh the balance in favour of text-only +3 versions.

'We couldn't use an ST picture on any Spectrum. A lot of our pictures can be reused. ST pictures can be converted to run on the Amiga or the PCW 8256 and the graphics

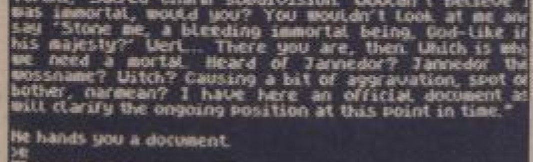




▶ Anita Sinclair taking pride of place beside *The Guild Of Thieves*

▲ **Even without these beautiful Amiga pictures . . .**

▼ **The Spectrum version of *Jinxter* is incredibly playable**



capabilities of the Commodore 64 are similar enough to the CPC for us to get away with it. If we did graphics on the Spectrum, to get them up to the quality of our other games, we would have to redraw them and we can't afford to do that on the basis of the sales that we expect. In any case, if the Spectrum did have graphics there'd be less memory to devote to the game and you'd have to go to disk more. Inevitably, that would slow the game down.

What do they think of the future of sound in adventures?

WIRED FOR SOUND

'On the Amiga versions of our games you can opt for spoken descriptions and enjoy a bit of music. Unfortunately sound is really heavy on memory. It would be nice to have creeping footsteps. The Amiga is probably one of the main machines you could do this on. Certainly with its stereo capabilities you could have binaural creeping footsteps. It might be a bit unsubtle though, having to tell the user that he has to plug in his headphones and wear them because he may be in for a surprise!.'

On the subject of icon-driven adventures their opinions are mixed.

'These games do narrow down the possibilities a lot which is easier from the programmer's point of view. You obviously ▶

have to cater for more possibilities if people can type anything they like. On the whole, I think these sort of games provide less of a challenge although there are one or two, like Mindscape's *Déjà Vu* which are really good. They cater for a more commercial market, but while there are still people who read and write books, there's still room for a more conventional approach like ours.

'Some games use a bit of both. In some respects they're OK but then, is it really easier to click the mouse over an icon saying N or just type it anyway? On the other hand, we do incorporate pull-down-and-use menus in some of our games, which allow you to switch off the graphics, make the descriptions brief or verbose, and so on. They're useful because unless you've read right through the manual you won't necessarily know they're there.'

As for violence in computer games, Magnetic Scrolls don't support a particularly pacifist stance. You can't die in *Jinxter* but the concept was introduced primarily as a gimmick.

'You CAN die in *Corruption* but the violence isn't excessive. In fact, our games tend to suggest that force doesn't get you anywhere very fast. Attack the old man in *The Guild of Thieves* or the guru in *The Pawn* and you're



dead. Blood and guts don't usually have that much to add to a game. It may be justified in a film setting where you're making an artistic point, but I don't think you're making that kind of point in a computer game. More often than not blood and gore is introduced as a marketing ploy, a form of teasing. If you really want to shock people then there are other ways of doing it.'

SOMETHING FISHY

In fact Magnetic Scrolls are more in the business of shocking by contrast. The realistic setting of *Corruption* is a pretty drastic departure from the fantasy world of Kerovnia and an even more innovative game is due to be released later this year. Known simply as *Fish!* the adventure begins in the underwater environment of an ordinary goldfish bowl. The arrival of a tacky plastic castle turns your uneventful fishy life into a multi-faceted, action packed experience. How could you possibly refuse the chance to explore?

That caters for the rest of this year. So far there aren't any plans for another Kerovnian tale, but Anita Sinclair assures me that it's a possibility; though to recreate the familiar atmosphere, it would have to be written by the same people who wrote the first three games. As for what could possibly follow *Fish!* – cod knows.

INSIDER INTRIGUE

There's a new Magnetic Scrolls adventure out and you know exactly what to expect: dragons, wizards, the odd gnome, a quaint old English village, a princess. Right? Wrong!

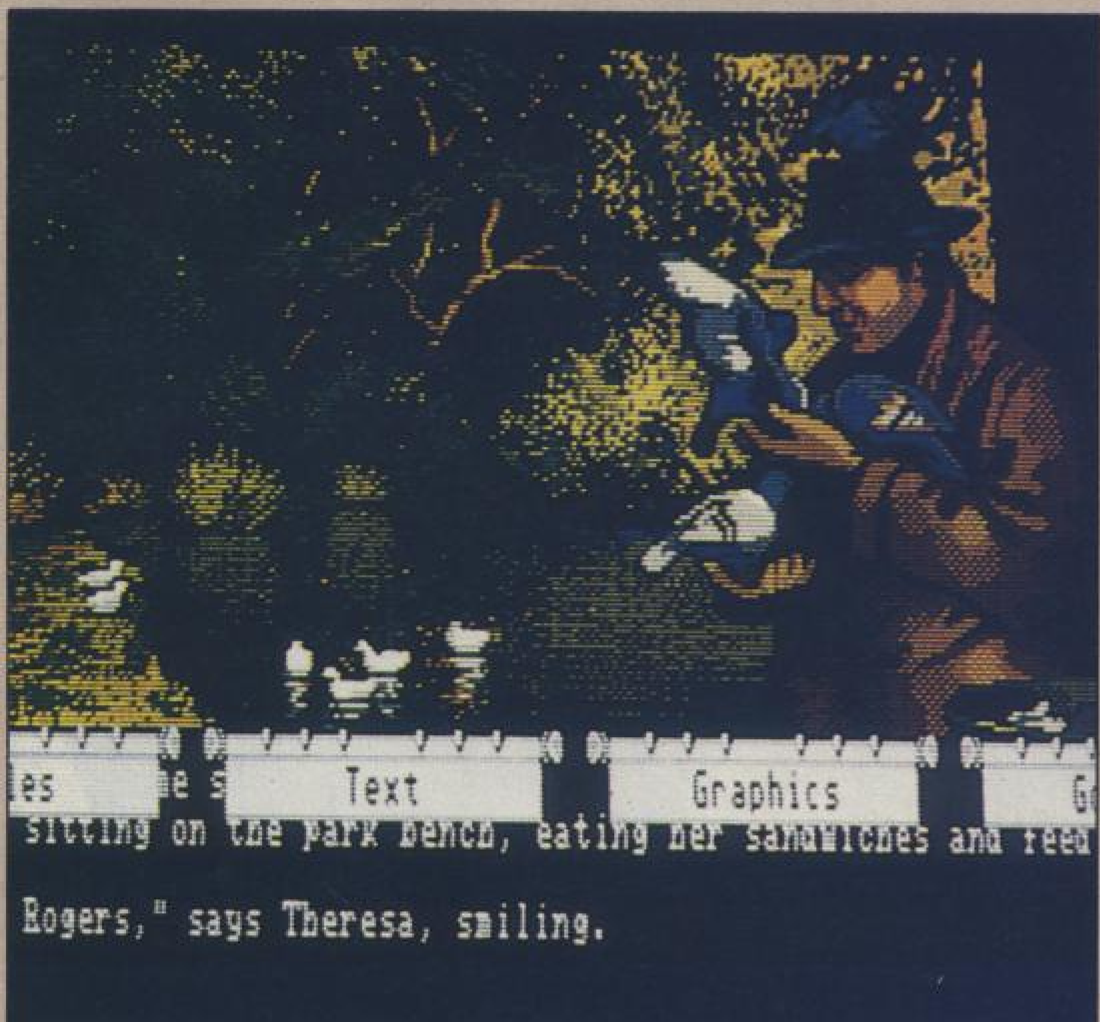
In fact *Corruption* is set in the heart of the City of London. You're the newly appointed partner in a firm of stockbrokers quietly settling in on your first day in the new job. Your office is spacious, there's a highly efficient secretary next door, and downstairs in the garage your BMW awaits. Life is looking rosy. At least that's how it seems. As time passes, you begin to realise that everything isn't completely above board. Certain clues point to insider dealing and it soon becomes horrifyingly clear that you're the chief suspect. Unless you keep your wits about you and manage to gather enough evidence to clear your name, you may never get to drive that BMW again.

The adventure clearly has a specialist appeal. Magnetic Scrolls feel that it's more likely to win the support of an older audience, particularly players who already know something about the business world. Anita Sinclair is concerned that people should consider what the game is about before they buy it. Even if you've enjoyed *Jinxter* there's no guarantee that you'll like *Corruption*; it's a completely different type of game. As a result the release has been given a comparatively low profile.

'If we hyped this to the ends of the earth a lot of people who would end up buying it wouldn't like it because they'd prefer a fantasy game. And that would put them off our future releases.'

So before you hand over your silver pennies, consider carefully whether you're really destined for yuppieland.

▼ 'We couldn't use an ST picture on any Spectrum'



As if by magic there's been a windfall of games just in time for the Adventure Trail Extra – and what a mixed bag they've turned out to be. In addition to the usual fix of home-grown, we've conjured up a couple of role-playing games, a compilation and the brand new Abstract Concepts production, *Mindfighter*.

In reply to all the enquiries regarding my origin, Samara is an ancient Egyptian name and not, as some ignoramus has seen fit to suggest, an obscure but fragrant brand of Persian peanut butter. May the curse of Ra be visited on anyone else who dares to make such a smart aleck suggestion.

MINDFIGHTER

Abstract Concepts, £14.99

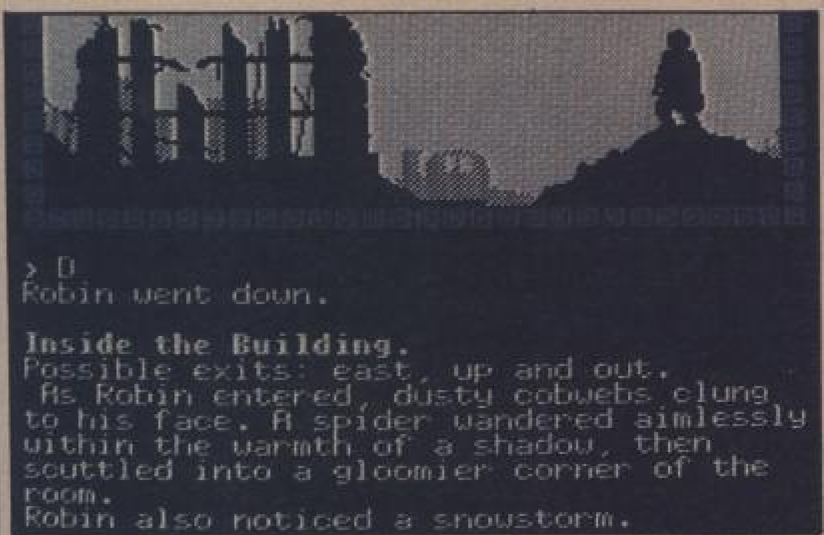
Robin is psychic. His talents have been recognised by a learned professor and he is under close observation. When, in an attempt to discover his exam results, Robin projects his sensitive mind into the future, he finds himself unable to get back. Trapped in the living nightmare of post-holocaust Southampton under the control of an inhumane system, he has only 24 hours to sabotage the enemy generator and return home.

Written by Ann Popkess and programmed by Fergus McNeill (author of the Tolkien spoofs *The Boggit* and *Bored of the Rings*), *Mindfighter* comes in a shiny box, complete with a poster and a novel recounting Robin's experiences in 1987 – the year before the war.

The nightmare itself takes place in 1988. Robin awakes on a mound of rubble in the midst of a smelling earth and survivors stumble aimlessly through the unrecognisable ruins of their former lives. Only at the docks is there any sign of organisation and activity.

As Robin's mental journey takes him nearer and nearer the nerve-centre of The System's operations, he can enlist the cooperation of a number of characters ranging from gentle Daryl to strong and independent Robert. Encounters with guards tend to be violent. As Robin is already weak it's advisable to carry a weapon and steer as clear as is feasibly possible of enemies.

Puzzles are very much centred around the game's two main objectives; survival and infiltration of enemy quarters. The post-holocaust city is pitted with hidden dangers. Clouds of corrosive gas poison the air, rabid animals scavenge desperately for food and the smell of corpses lingers everywhere. To get familiar with this alien environment you're



▲ An echo of the past in a horrifying vision of the future

terrifyingly desolate cityscape. Wandering amongst the charred and smouldering remains, poignantly illustrated in graphic silhouette, he finds little evidence of the kind of life with which he is familiar. Bands of hungry men club skinny dogs to death for food, corpses litter the sour- bound to die several times as you explore.

The instruction booklet is full of advice for novice adventurers which doesn't turn out to be particularly helpful. The problems are fairly obscure right from the very start. On several occasions, you're only given one chance to provide a solution; if you don't the game comes to a grinding halt. This level of difficulty may be acceptable well into a game but it isn't very user (or beginner) -friendly early on. Requests for HELP are met by blank incomprehension and none of the responses to the EXAMINE command provide any sort of clue. It helps to have read the novel as the accompanying scenario is extremely sketchy.

Not that the supposedly sophisticated SWAN makes the process any easier. Having found a newspaper clipping, for example, you can only GET NEWSPAPER (a totally different thing), not CLIPPING which is treated as a totally foreign and unrecognisable word. Bugs allow you to burn rags to a cinder over and over again, pick up petrol when you've poured it all over the ground and after it's gone up in a series of impressive flames. A dead dog, clearly described, stops existing when you try to do much with it and a fairly standard command, like INSERT ROD, is received by the outlandish, 'Robin couldn't go in – only east'. You may find yourselves inventing plenty of titles for the System Without A Name.

The long-anticipated, eagerly awaited *Mindfighter* is something of a disappointment. The first adventure release from a major software house in ages with one of the most stimulating scenarios ever, turns out to be mediocre, unenjoyable and comparatively unplayable. Not that *Mindfighter* is an unmitigated disaster. It just doesn't live up to the quality associated with the flashy packaging and a bigger than the average price tag. Have a go on somebody else's before you decide to buy it for yourself.

OVERALL 69%

THE BARD'S TALE

Electronic Arts, £8.95 (cassette), £14.95 (disk)

On other formats, *The Bard's Tale* has been going strong for some time. In fact, it's been so popular that some are into their third instalment; *The Bard's Tale III*. Admittedly, what is essentially a role-playing game transferred to your home computer isn't exactly an adventure but, taking into account elements of exploration, strategy and analysis, it seems to fit in more with the adventure than the arcade scene.

The scenario certainly sounds very like an adventure. The city of Skara Brae has been transformed into a dark and dangerous place by Mangar, a nefarious, megalomaniac mage. Vicious man-eating dogs patrol the streets, thieves lurk around every corner and giant spiders spin their massive webs in anticipation of attack.

Thrust into the midst of all this activity you have been chosen to gather together a party of six warriors to find Mangar and force him to release the city. The quest begins in the safety of the Adventurers' Guild. You can create your own six characters or step straight into battle with a ready-made party known ironically as the A team.

Characters are selected from seven races including human, hobbit and half-elf. Each is allocated different attributes (strength, IQ, dexterity, magic power, gold etc) in the form of points and is given a character classification. Warrior class adventurers, for example, can use nearly every available weapon, bards have the power to sing magical songs and four varieties of mage specialise in different branches of magic. Viewing mode, accessed via the keyboard, gives information on the status of each character and the number of objects he is carrying.

As the party moves through Skara Brae, the landscape ahead is shown in the form of a functional, monochrome viewing window. The journey winds through mazes, taverns, shops and buildings and it's not long before the group comes under attack. Combat takes place as a series of rounds. A list of actions available to each member of the party is given and once these have been selected (there's a chance to change your mind), your strategies are enacted.

As one player you can plan the simultaneous actions of up to six characters. Spells make the process all the more exciting. Depending on their magic ability, magicians and conjurers can (among other things) heal wounds, hurl supernatural weapons, enhance the fighting ability of a companion or conjure up burly monsters as allies. Combined with the magical properties of a bard's song, these can make for some enthralling battle scenes. Role-playing computer games can sometimes be criticised for their lack of variety. With so many possible ▶



▲ Stalwart fighters or cowardy custards – only the bard can tell

courses of action available, combat, which forms the mainstay of the game, is unlikely to become repetitive.

Weapons, torches and magical objects are scattered through the environment and can be sold, bought or exchanged at Garth's Equipment Shoppe. Roscoe's Energy Emporium sells spell points and temples provide healing and resurrection, but only at a price. Gain sufficient experience and your character class rating can rise from green and innocent novice (Level 1) to vastly experienced master (Level 13) though to get to this stage you'll have to put in weeks and weeks of play.

The Skara Brae environment is so complex and involves so many different factors that it's hard not to get completely enthralled in your quest. The combination of hack and slay, exploration and magic ensure plenty of variety and demand more than a modicum of strategic thought. If you do get stuck *The Bard's Tale* cluebook is available from Electronic Arts' Customer Service (0753 46465) for £5.00. Obviously you don't get the same sophistication that you might in a text input adventure but what *The Bard's Tale* lacks in terms of depth it certainly makes up for in role-playing action and complexity. Adventure enthusiasts should definitely give it a try.

OVERALL 86%

TIME AND MAGIK

Level 9/Mandarin, £14.95 (cassette or disk)

First came *Jewels of Darkness* and *Silicon Dreams*. As compilations of Level 9's most popular games tantalisingly packaged (by Rainbird) in an attractive blue box, they became essential additions to every adventurer's collection. The presentation of Level 9's latest trilogy of re-releases *Time And Magik* (published, this time, by Mandarin) is just as impressive. The instructions are comprehensive and a glossy novella sets the scene for an exotic journey into a world of spells, magic and mysteries unknown.

LORDS OF TIME

The oldest of the trio is probably the most impressive. As a portrait in your living room suddenly springs into life, it reveals that a group of megalomaniac Timelords are plotting to take control of the world. Unless nine different objects bearing the impression of an hourglass are thrown into a cauldron at the end of time, the planet's fate is sealed.

A grand tour of history follows. The vital objects are scattered throughout nine different time zones accessed via a Tardis-like grandfather clock. Wandering through Ice Age caverns, past a prehistoric water hole and into a dangerous Roman amphitheatre, you encounter a series of perplexing puzzles. Successful interaction with (among others) clumsy dinosaurs, sabre-toothed tigers and Viking raiders (death is a constant possibility) leads to a final showdown with the terrible Timelords themselves. Carefully constructed, with complex, though logical problems, this is perhaps the most challenging of the three to play.

RED MOON

The Red Moon Crystal has been stolen from the Moon Tower on the island of Baskalos – and you've got to get it back. Your journey winds through plains and forests, past the edge of a very active volcano to a complex network of chambers in the castle of Cakabol. Puzzles centre around collecting the appropriate objects to cast a series of spells and weaving the correct enchantments within a limit of 50 magic points.

Like *The Price of Magik*, it's a totally different type of adventure from *Lords Of Time*. The emphasis is on exploration (the environment is seemingly endless) rather than solving specific problems. Once you've acquired the right focus for each spell it's simply a matter of using them in the right place. If you're after puzzles that you can really get your teeth into, you may be in for a slight disappointment.

THE PRICE OF MAGIK

The Red Moon Crystal has gone missing again. This time Mylgar, the jewel's guardian, has been driven mad by the crystal's radiance. If you manage to retrieve it, you will be given the chance to take his place.

As you explore a mysterious mansion, you are faced with the task of learning 18 magic spells. Shrieking mandrakes, howling werewolves, and mysterious skeletons shake your sanity and attempt to drive you, as well as Mylgar, mad. Map-making is essential; the environment is incredibly complex and demands hours of careful exploration. In fact, apart from the spells, exploration is about all there is to *The Price of Magik*. Plenty of adventurers will find this sufficiently stimulating in itself. Others might feel a little put off by the absence of really challenging puzzles.

All three adventures are distinguished by elaborate descriptions and some fairly

▼ Dare you enter the holiday cottage?

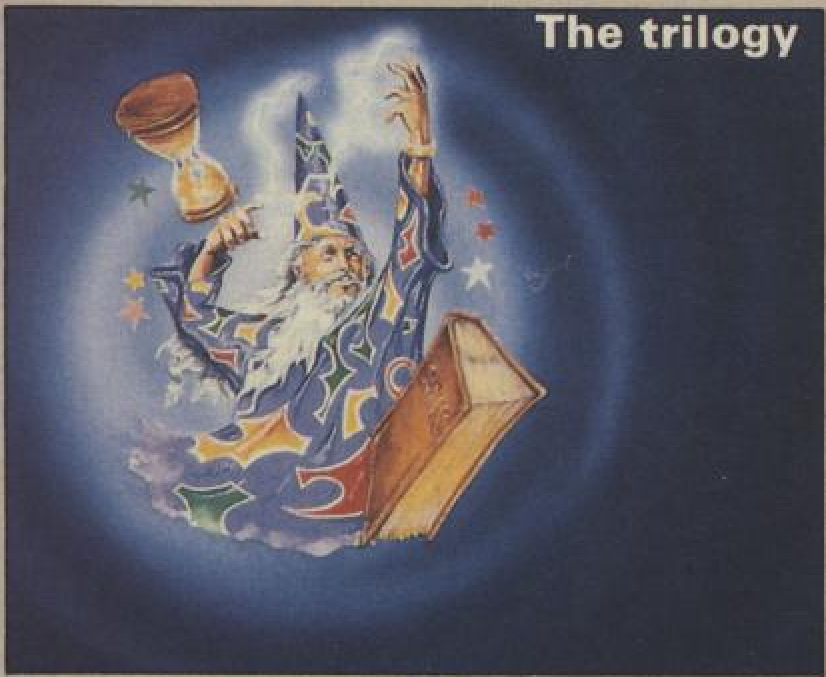


uninspired graphics. As you'd expect from Level 9, there are plenty of superfluous locations with features that turn out to be 'just scenery' when you EXAMINE them. Considering that these are supposed to be improved versions of the original games, it would have been nice to have one or two extra responses.

The KAOS parser accepts most complex commands although there are one or two anomalies. Try and put anything in your backpack, for example, and you'll find the desired object lying on the ground. Facilities, though, are practically endless and very useful. You can turn off the graphics, determine the length of the location text (brief or verbose), switch EXITs on and off, SAVE, RAMSAVE and UNDO a foolish move. Apart from a GOTO or RUN command, you couldn't really ask for more.

As a compilation of re-releases, *Time And Magik* shouldn't be expected to match up to the standard of more recent Level 9 productions. Still – as a set of classic games which were initially released to rapturous acclaim, they're a must for every serious adventurer's collection. If you missed out the first time go out and buy them - just don't expect too much.

OVERALL 70%



RETURN TO DOOM

Topologika, £12.95 (disk only)

Countdown to Doom (85%, Issue 52) had you trying to escape from the inhospitable planet Doomwangara before your damaged spaceship corroded away to nothing. You've just settled back into ordinary life, flying the odd routine mission, when an unexpected distress call comes through on your intercom. An ambassador has been kidnapped by a group of renegade robots. Unless you reach her in time, she is *Doom* ed.

The planet hasn't changed much since you were last here. Its climate is erratic and its terrain encompasses a wide variety of different geographical features. Thick jungles abut treacherous swamps, dark tunnels lead out into a world of poisonous fields, alkaline lakes and acid seas and in the midst of it all is a strange and half-familiar artefact.

Sudden death is a constant possibility in this bizarre and surrealistic land. One false step and you could be dissolving painfully in a shower of acid rain, sinking into quicksand or chomped into a thousand pieces by a set of monstrous granite teeth. As if that wasn't enough, the planet is crawling with ecosaurs, allodiles, pteromorphs, grobblers and montipythons. They're all pretty keen on the odd pound of human flesh and must be treated with the greatest care and respect. If you do end up plummeting, disintegrating, dematerialising or sinking to an unexpected death, the program sometimes gives you the chance to pretend that you haven't. Magically you reappear at the location previous to your nasty accident and continue, a much wiser and (hopefully) better man/woman.

Proceed far enough and you come across a unique and unusual four-legged friend. Talkative and reasonably helpful, he makes a welcome (and humorous) change from the singularly antagonistic tone of the rest of the planet. As man's best (and only) friend, he comes in particularly useful when solving some of the characteristically fiendish puzzles. Governed by a general, if sometimes implausible, logic they are quite hard to grasp at first, not least because of a confusingly large number of red herrings.

If you've played *Countdown to Doom*, you're definitely in with an advantage; huge pieces of moving landscape and initially obscure connections between seemingly abstract objects won't seem that unusual. Baffled beginners can always seek help from the inbuilt hint system and keep saving to disk. It's definitely worth persevering; there's immense satisfaction to be gained from solving an offbeat problem that's been bugging you for days.

A no-nonsense parser accepts complex sentences, EXCEPT and ALL but no pronouns, adverbs or EXAMINE commands, and doesn't really merit the inflated price. Unlike the other Topologika games I've reviewed, this one is not a re-release, yet its only significant difference lies in a slightly less blank response to the EXAMINE command. It's not an improvement that really justifies the extra three pounds.

Minor quibbles aside, *Return to Doom* has enough material to fuel hours and hours of intriguing play. It recreates the atmosphere of the original Doomwangara game without overlapping too much in terms of content and its unusual puzzles provide an interesting change from some of the more main-stream adventures around. If you're after a challenge, have plenty of time and a bit of cash to spare, contact Topologika at *FREEPOST, PO Box 39, Stilton, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, PE7 3BR.*

OVERALL 80%

FAIRLY DIFFICULT MISSION

Zodiac Software, £3.50
Authors: Andy Lowe and Dave Dutton

As if in response to my recent pleas for more female heroines, Zodiac Software have created Charlotte Webster. A fairly ordinary mortal with a weakness for computer games and Bay City Rollers posters (yukk), she is hurled into the midst of an absurdly crucial mission by the purchase of an innocent-looking computer game. Won over by the excruciatingly awful poetry of a certain Zytrwxz ('runty looking') she is summoned to the court of King Derek of Fantasmia ('self-loving') who charges her with the task of defeating the wicked, devastatingly evil and thoroughly selfish Ruth ('nasty').

This epic quest is divided into five action-packed parts, including an intermission which gives you a chance to sit back and savour the jokes over a quiet little snack. The adventure takes you through the obligatory glowing portal, the inevitable maze, a withered (no sorry, handsome) old man, a locked tower and a very climbable looking tree. No prizes for guessing that this whistle-stop tour of adventureland isn't to be taken entirely seriously. There's even a cliché corner where you can solve all your favourite puzzles for the 50000th time AND enjoy them.

It's very easy for a parody to lurch into a repetitive round of boring, predictable and thoroughly monotonous spoofs. This one doesn't – probably because there's too much going on. The screen does a passable imitation of your trusty Speccy loading up, turns into a badly programmed home-grown adventure complete with spelling mistakes (it's all over in a moment, don't panic) and punctuates Charlotte's trip with one or two appropriately musical sound effects. A variety of friendly and not so friendly Fantasmians include Norris the joking gnome, a sexist bookseller, several stereotypes, a herd of man-eating cows, a journalistic elf called Mike and an orc – of course.

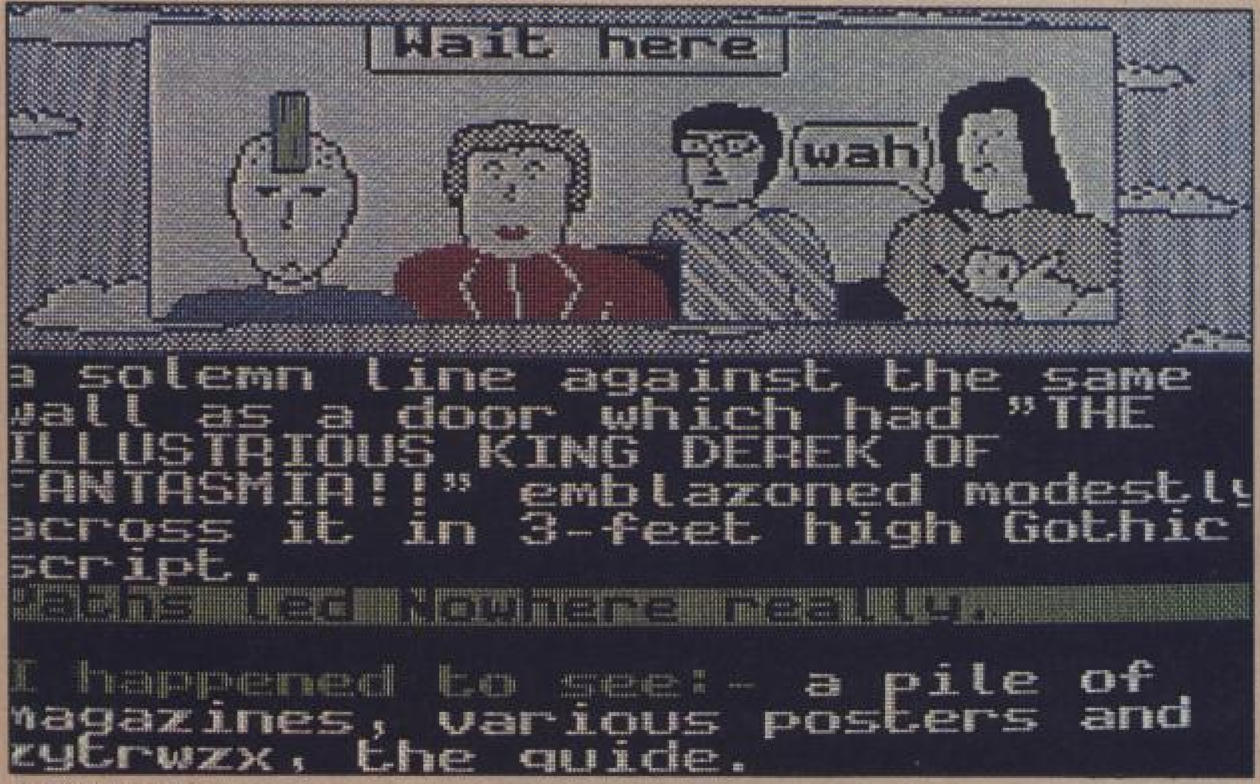
Behind all this lunacy there lurks quite a playable adventure. Don't expect mind-bending puzzles (you'll be too busy reading the text anyway), just a thoroughly entertaining jaunt through a jungle of parodies, ▶

wisecracks and cross-references. Interaction with other characters is always interesting and almost always helpful. If you do get really stuck you can summon Zytrwxz by saying Z. The environment is complex enough to take quite a bit of exploration and one or two brain-teasers should keep you guessing for a while.

As another production home-grown in the fertile soil of Gilsoft's *PAW*, *Fairly Difficult Mission* has all the facility's usual advantages. The parser accepts complex sentences and pronouns, allows you to speak to other characters and has a RAMSAVE feature. Inevitably there are a few limitations but no very glaring ones.

Presentation throughout is impeccable. Colourful graphics and one or two special effects turn Charlotte's fairly difficult mission into a very professional game. If you have the odd £3.50 to spare, a lunatic streak, and a dark sense of humour, send your grubby contributions to Zodiac Software, *22 Peakdale Avenue, Goldenhill, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire*.

OVERALL 76%



▲ Meet Mrs Mop

THE REALM

Cult, £1.99

There's bound to be something nasty hiding in the forest north of Thryll Town. As a seasoned adventurer it's hardly the sort of thing to put you off, but as you enter the cool and leafy environment, your heart pounds nevertheless. Who knows what may be in store?

The ensuing journey winds from wizard's cottage through thickets and scrub, long grass and pine trees, a stone circle and a series of caves to the centre of the forest realm. Locations are accompanied intermittently by forgettable monochrome illustrations which take a while to re-draw. With a couple of exceptions they don't really enhance the sparse and minimalist location text.

A functional scenario hides a comparatively ordinary set of puzzles. Once you've found the mysterious spellbook in the wizard's kitchen, most of the rest of the adventure consists of collecting the correct ingredients (frogs, snakes, furry fwoobles, mouldy carrots etc) in order to cast spells to gather more ingredients. Characters ranging from an extremely thirsty nomad, to a hungry but musical little girl, will provide you with the appropriate object only if you help them first. What follows is a frantic round of search and exchange which soon begins to lose its appeal. As each individual defines exactly what he needs by name, you don't even get the chance to work out what exactly it is he wants.

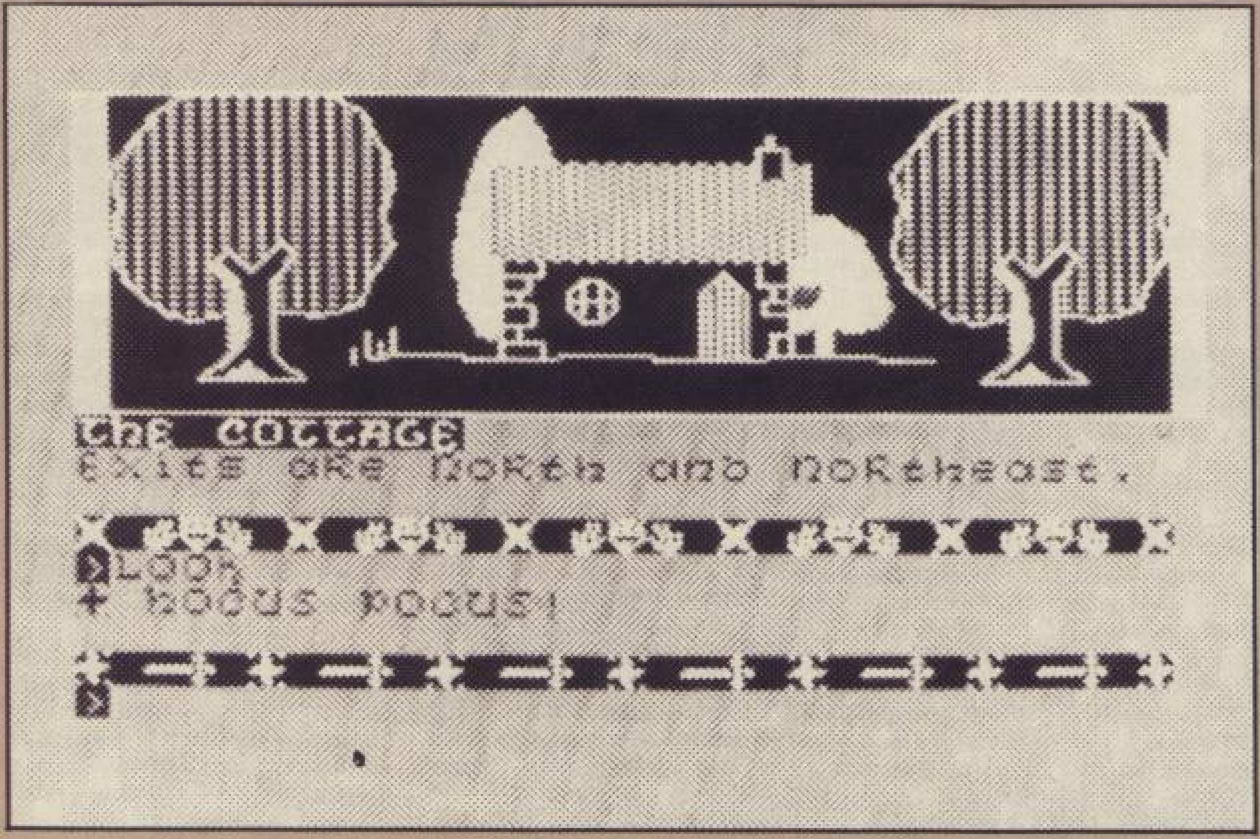
An element of danger adds a little spice to what would otherwise become an even more mundane and monotonous trek. Collect the ingredients in the wrong order or get caught in some of the forest's natural hazards, and your quest comes to a sudden and sometimes sticky end. The procedure becomes something of a logic problem as you try to work out which of the nasties (troll, giant spider etc) you have the power to tackle first. Get it wrong and your adventure in the sinister forest realm is doomed.

Even for a budget game, the parser is extremely limited. It accepts approximately 16 verbs and no complex commands. There is a SAVE option, though no RAMSAVE and you can turn the pictures off for faster play. As the puzzles are so basic, the lack of flexibility doesn't matter that much. Simple commands solve simple problems.

The Realm might work as an introduction to adventuring for a very green beginner. The more experienced won't find it much of a challenge. Exploring and swapping objects is quite entertaining at first and there are one or two interesting features, but on the whole it's unlikely that any initial appeal will last. Considering the quality of some of the home-grown adventures on offer at the moment, you'd probably be happier spending your money on those.

OVERALL 49%

▼ Knock on the door and see what's inside



THE DAMNED FOREST

Cult, £1.99

Four precious diamonds have been stolen from the Black King's crown. The loss has turned him black in character as well as name; any visitor to his castle is imprisoned unless he bears the jewels. The kingdom's fourteen nobles have gathered together to hire a mercenary. Unless he manages to locate and unlock the four chests in which the gems are hidden, the land is doomed.

As the game quest begins you can choose to play one of four characters: wizard, elf, man or dwarf. The attributes peculiar to each are depicted onscreen in the form of luck, strength and stamina points. A menu to the right shows the number and type of spells available.

What ensues is a cross between a role-playing game and an adventure. As you move through the rugged landscape of forbidding forests, windswept plains, marshes, lakes and seemingly impassable seas, your actions are limited to a number of options constantly depicted to the right of the screen. By pressing the appropriate key, you can examine, pick up and drop objects, travel, look in the direction of adjacent locations, cast spells or rest. Up to four objects, listed on a separate menu, can be carried at any one time.

Inevitably, the emphasis is on exploration and combat rather than solving puzzles. Map-making is essential. As you find yourself in a different location at the start of every game, you're forced to re-map till you become totally familiar with the potentially treacherous terrain.

The kingdom is crawling with dangerously bloodthirsty creatures. Giants, trolls, bears, ogres and orcs engage in battle the moment they see your tasty flesh. Depending on your ability and equipment you can attempt to counter using weapons or magic. Stamina and strength points are quickly diminished by direct enemy hits, though you can replenish energy and stores in villages and at life-giving springs. It's important to watch your step, as getting caught by a powerful nasty when you don't have much ammunition, leads to almost instant death. Frustratingly you can't escape; the program only asks which weapon you want to use, not whether you actually want to fight. Pacifists are definitely out.

If the responses to frenzied key pressing weren't so slow, the process of exploration, fighting, and making limited use of objects, would become quite engrossing. As it is, you have to wait ages for the screen to catch up with your fingers. Worse still, every time you die the game crashes and you're forced to reload from scratch. As it's quite easy to get caught in a no-win situation, especially at first, hours of miserable loading are ahead for anyone who really wants to get into the game. There is a SAVE option which allows you to record your character or your current position. I tried twice to save a game without success and was forced, bored and frustrated, to reload right from the beginning again.

All these drawbacks combined make *The Damned Forest* extremely frustrating to play. The Black King's plight pales into insignificance as you wage war against the keyboard, battle with the loading system and attempt to make sense of the SAVE options. Role-players and adventurers alike are well-advised to steer clear of this exhausting experience.

OVERALL 41%

▼ **A more exciting moment from** *The Damned Forest*



SIGN STUMPS

SMUGGLER'S COVE

MARK MCGREGOR from Ballindalloch is stuck behind the trapdoor and wants to know how to open the oak door.

OPEN or PUSH TRAPDOOR. Unlock the door with the key from the lake.

DRACULA

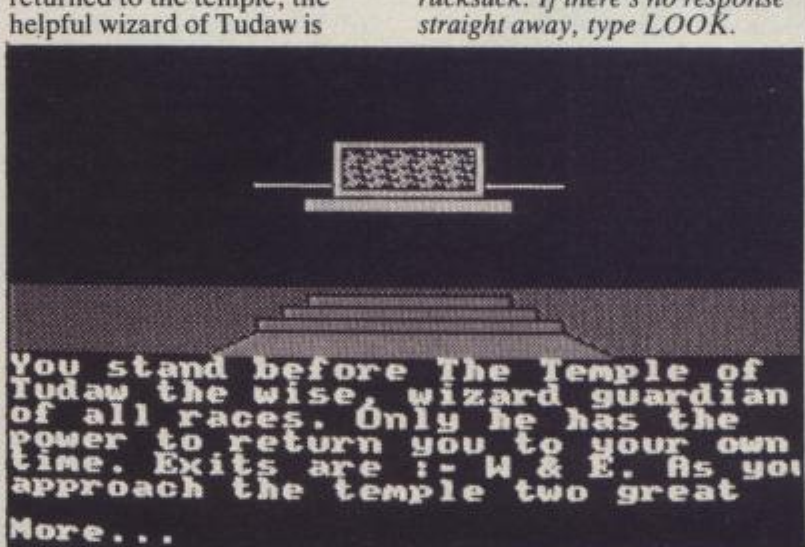
PAUL SANDS is wandering around in the forest with very little idea of what to do.

Once in the thick of the forest, go west, north, west, south, east. Go south from the path. Having found the wall, look for the tree and climb it.
(Thanks to DAVE EDWARDS)

MONSTER

MR E IRONMONGER thinks this home-grown game is one of the best he's ever played. Unfortunately, though he's got the staff of power and has returned to the temple, the helpful wizard of Tudaw is nowhere to be found.

Carry the staff in your hands; the wizard can't see it if it's in the rucksack. If there's no response straight away, type LOOK.



GREMLINS

GRAHAM MCLEOD is still being pestered by the gremlins. He writes:
1 Where is the camera?
2 Where is the smaller pipe?
3 How can I get rid of the gremlins in Dorry's tavern?

1 In the bar.
2 Cut the pipe behind the bar using the hacksaw from the hardware department. Join the two pipes with the tape.
3 Press the camera button.

MINDSHADOW

A question from R A SALMON and another from EVAN RICHARDS.
1 How do I leave the island?
2 What do I do in Luxembourg?

1 Get some steel from the ruined dory and use the rock and the steel to start a fire on the hidden beach. When the captain arrives, give him the rum.
2 Enter the inn, examine the hat and follow instructions.

▶

SHADOWS OF MORDOR

As if it's not enough being unable to cook the fish, Faramir won't believe A SIMS when he tries to identify himself. WAYNE HOPKINS can't lift the logs to build the raft.

Break the branch several times to make twigs. Put the coney in the pan. Open the matchbox, light a match, light the twigs and sprinkle salt on the fish. Put the pan on the fire and cook.

Say to Faramir, 'I am a hobbit'.

Get Sam to give all to Frodo, then tell him to drag one of the logs. Go W, N, NW, SW and drop the log. Repeat till you have all four logs. Tie the logs with string and pole your newly-made raft away.

KENTILLA

ADAM LACKIE wants to know how to kill the Urga Maul that attacks him in the dungeon and what to do with the rope and the wax. NEIL MANSON can't get Elva to shoot Darg-Vool and catches the black death every time he attempts to take the black rod.

SAY KENTILLA to get the sword. Use it to kill the Urga.

Go west from the Cavezat's cavern. Tie the rope to the stalagmite and pull the rope twice. At the river bank, throw the rope and swing across.

Give one of the knives to Elva before you reach Carawood. She/he will make a longbow and arrows.

You need to cast the cure disease spell. The scroll is in the chest inside the castle. The magic ingredient is dried moss. Look for this on the river bank and dry it on the scorched plain.

MATT LUCAS

PAUL HOSKINS has a whole list of problems:

1 What happens once I'm in the boat?
2 Is it worth buying the jacket?
3 How can I catch the pusher?
4 How do I open the safe at Phil's place?
5 How can I get rid of the thug at the warehouse?

1 Follow the directions on the map to get to the island.
2 No.
3 Shoot him.
4 TAKE VASE, TIP VASE, read the note and dial the number.
5 Shoot him.

LORD OF THE RINGS

More questions from Wayne, this time concerning the black riders. They always kill Frodo before he has a chance to take any action. For CHRIS BAKER it's crossing the ford that poses a problem.

Become Frodo and Merry and enter the Prancing Pony Inn. Send Sam and Pippin to kill the riders.

Find Glorfindel's stallion (S, W, W from the beginning of Part 2). Go south from here to get back to the highway and ride the stallion east.

(Thanks to DEREK JENKINS and DES DAVIES)

THE HELM

Veteran adventurer TONY GRIST would like to know what to do to open his spellbook.

SIFT FLOUR to get the key to unlock the book. Don't open it till you're in the chapel. Insert the penny from the toilet (pull the chain) to get rid of the forcefield.

BORED OF THE RINGS

ROGER BURT and MARK FREEMAN are desperately stuck in the land of muddle earth. Roger wants to know where to find the pepper and the battery for the vending machine. Mark can't open the microwave oven box and needs a key to unlock the door near the base of the lift.

At Whee, go S and enter the inn. When the stranger arrives, go out, N, E and along the secret pathway. When south of the mountain, go N, then up. Drop the pepper at the Morona Gate to get through.

Once arrived in part 2, go E, E, collect battery. Insert it in the machine.

You need the scissors from the bar. Kill the gremlins using the debugger.

In the cave with one chasm, type THROW ROPE and swing. The key is in the caves.

(Thanks to GARY SPENCER)

KNIGHT ORC

JAMES BROAD from Oxford is in a prickly spot. He can see Rapunzel's tower but he just can't get across the hedge that separates him from her valuable hair.

Put the mat on the hedge.



KWAH

DANIEL BUFTON, who lives just down the road from CRASH Towers is quietly going mad in the padded cell.

Press play on the recorder; you change to Redhawk and the ropes disappear.

RIGEL'S REVENGE

For ROGER BURT, STUART BRAND and everyone else still tearing their hair out over the problem of the basement, there follows a complete run down of the necessary actions.

Examine the sink, GET MEDIKIT, WEAR MEDIKIT, climb on to the sink. Press the red button, pull the bar hard, bend or push the bar hard. When Harper feels drained, press the green button.

NOTE: You don't need to load the gun. Just carrying it gives enough protection in Suburbia.

Don't just take any uniform; you need a Rigelian one to get past the soldiers later.

Go down to get the bomb.

THE LEGEND OF APACHE GOLD

NICK HUNT always loses the long thin branch when he tries to cut it with the tomahawk. He can't find the ants' nest and can't get into the mine.

Let the branch fall into the river below. You can retrieve it later from the shallow pool.

The ants' nest is in the ant hill at the edge of the desert.

As you try to enter the mine, a dancing Indian appears and bars the way. Sock it to him as he demands: INSERT JEWEL into the socket of the empty eye.

Blank? Brilliant? Bold? Bemused? Send your tips and queries on adventures old and new to SIGNSTUMPS, CRASH, *PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB.*

The most interesting are published, but personal replies are not possible. Anyway you wouldn't believe the postage from Egypt

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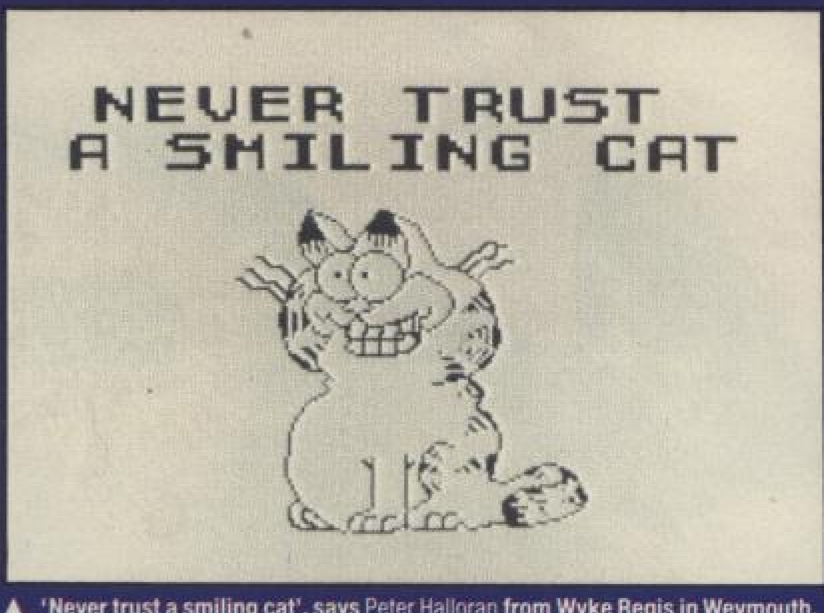
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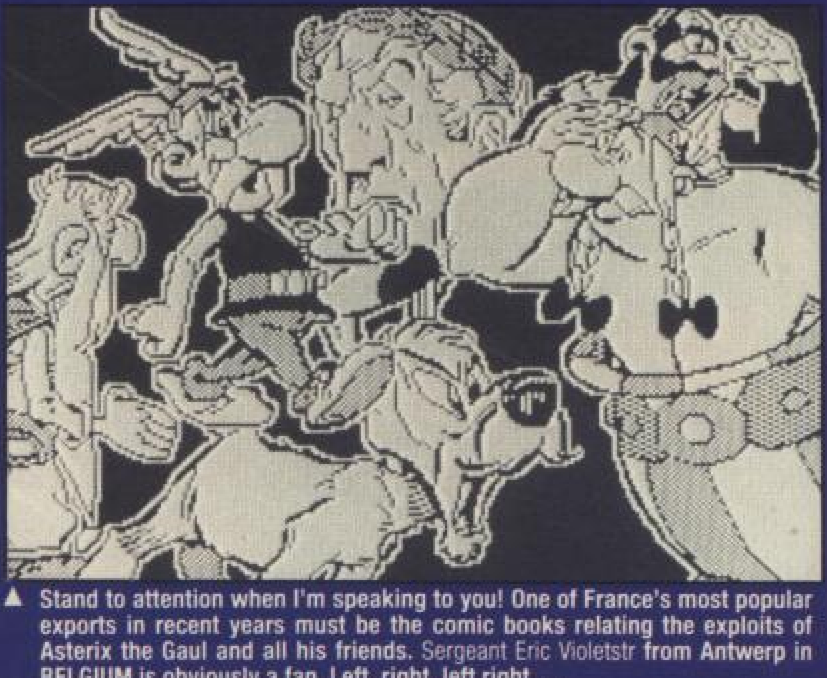
Yes he's back. It's the man who likes nothing more than to listen to James Brown (Ow!) through his B+W DM220 hi-fi speakers (whatever they are), or walk around the office casually dropping hints about *another* Atari ST game he was playing last night (whilst listening to James Brown, of course). After a brief period sampling the delights of NHS hospitality (not worth feeding to Nick Roberts, he tells us), Mark 'Renoir' Caswell has returned to cast a stern eye over this month's batch of Spectrum screens . . .



▲ **'Never trust a smiling cat', says** Peter Halloran **from Wyke Regis in Weymouth. Sound advice, especially where that lovable rogue Garfield is concerned.**

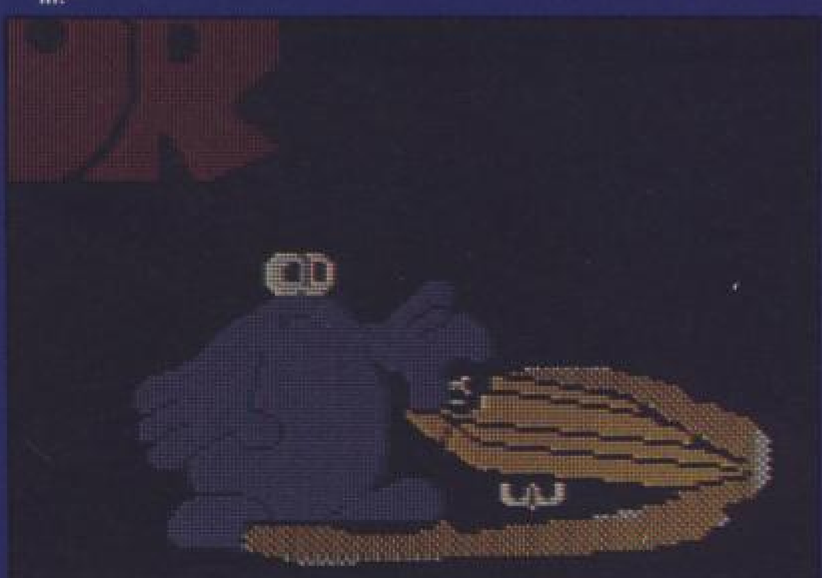
▼ **Is it Bub or Bob? Anyway, whichever one it is,** Peter Halloran **has done a superb job in transfering the arcade duo of *Bubble Bobble* to the Spectrum screen.**

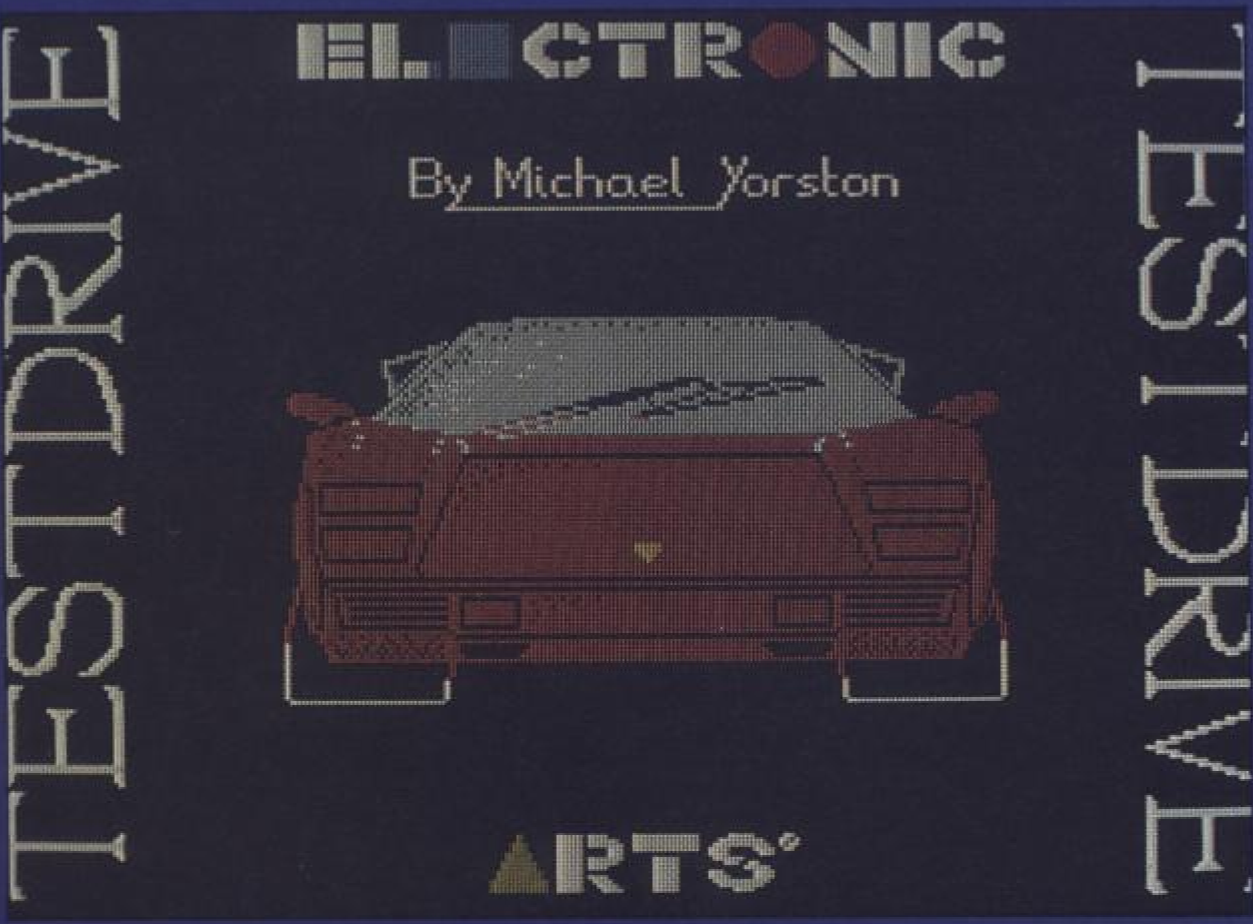




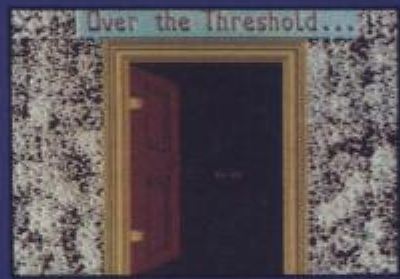
▲ **Stand to attention when I'm speaking to you! One of France's most popular exports in recent years must be the comic books relating the exploits of Asterix the Gaul and all his friends.** Sergeant Eric Violetstr **from Antwerp in BELGIUM is obviously a fan. Left, right, left right . . .**

▼ **What will Berk find beneath the trap door?** Javier Segura Klepatzky **all the way from PERU doesn't tell us, though, I'm sure it's not worth sticking your finger in!**





◄ Vroom! Vroom! I'd love to drive around in a car like this one, who wouldn't? Oh well, perhaps in a few years time if the powers that be consider a small increase in my salary. Dom could you . . . ? (Most certainly not – Ed) (Oh well, it's always worth a try!) Thanks go to Michael Yorston in Romford for this tempting and seductive picture of a Ferrari.



▲ In true 'Twilight Zone' style, Matthew Hales from Stowmarket in Suffolk invites us to step 'Over The Threshold'. Not likely mate!

► Just when you thought it was safe to go back in the shower, Judge Death shows his ugly mug. Chris Hallen from Scholar Green in Stoke-on-Trent is obviously a *2000AD* fan. Trouble is, just like Nicko Roberts, you can never find Judge Dredd when you want him!



▼ Hooray, it's Jetman, our own lovable loony (with a few of his friends). Mr G Summers from Nottingham sent in this similitude of one of CRASH's favourite characters. What I want to know is when he's going to return in another game, eh?



Well, I'm afraid that's it for this month. Remember the prize? I suppose it's hard to forget really, as you get told every time – but for those of you not paying attention I'll tell you again . . . An action-packed £40 worth of software goes to the lucky person whose entry is deemed the best of the month, with £10 worth of software for everyone else featured. And don't forget, please include a SAE if you want your tape returned. (It's no good spinning me some yarn about the 'new recession' in The Thatcher Era and your lack of money for the impending increase in postage, I've heard it (and done it!) all before.) Please send your SCREEN$s to, MARK 'RENOIR' CASWELL, ON THE SCREEN, CRASH, *PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.* See you next month and keep those pixels coming.

1988 PBM MAILBOX



A MITRE FALLS

Among other things, BRENDON KAVANAGH bids farewell to Mitre Games and welcomes a new fanzine to the PBM scene, read on . . .

AS I wipe a tear from my eye, I must sadly inform you of Mitre Games' demise (at 12:30 on Wednesday June 8). Suffice to say a fair few debts are hanging in the air. I understand that the company was no longer a viable business proposition (large overheads and few GMs being only a minor problem).

What now happens to the players who have credit balances with Mitre? And what of their games? Well, in general, all is not lost. *Midgard* is returning to the States, so present players will be able to continue playing by Air Mail, without financial loss – hopefully. *Global Supremacy* is presently up for auction, with several large companies hoping to get hold of the game. *Starmaster* and *Starship Commander* may not be so lucky: these two games are time consuming to moderate and may have difficulty in finding a buyer. Whilst *Tribes Of Crane* has almost certainly had its chips.

I do not know whether any games taken over will continue. Or, if the new owners will take the old players and start them up afresh in a new game; only time will tell. Hopefully, no players should lose any money – the sale of the games should raise enough to refund all credit accounts. I shall keep my ear to the ground.

PBM START-UP

Ian Lacey has recently sent me a copy of a new PBM fanzine, which he has co-written with Stuart Filmer, cleverly entitled *Start-Up (+2 free turns)*. It's still in its infancy, though. The small sample copy I received bodes well for the future. An intelligently written editorial, followed by a couple of well planned reviews (including a 'marks out of ten' system) and a comprehensive library of rulebooks for readers. More information about *Start-Up* when I get a production copy. Meanwhile, for information you can write to Ian at ***Start-Up, Orchard Cottage, Greenways, Florden, Norwich, Norfolk NR15 1QL***.

Issue Five of *PBM Scroll* is currently available. This little organ has really grown since I first plugged it all those months ago. It is now in A5 size with 32 pages, including reviews; a readers chart; hints and tips; a feature on *Feudal Lords*; a large section dedicated to sports games and much more! **John Woods** holds all the information at ***91 Wandle Road, Morden, Surrey SM4 6AD***.

Next month they'll be more on KJC's future plans plus an update on all that's wild and wonderful in the crazy world of playing by mail . . .

HELP AT HAND

Kevin Taylor, an experienced player in *The Chronicles Of The Knights Of Avalon*, kindly sent in a long list of informative points. Here are are the best . . .

(i) The most important part of the game is alliances. *Avalon* cannot be won by a single player, no matter how brilliant you are. Finding some good friends and forming an alliance is therefore top priority. As soon as possibly (if you haven't already), write to as many people as you can through the internal mail. As with all games though, trust no one but your best friend (and you cannot always trust him! – BK).

(ii) Your second priority is mapping. It is essential that you keep track of all your armies and that you exchange province maps with everyone – aiming to find out where you are on the master map. The system that works best is to use four sheets of centimetre graph paper stuck together; these provide the exact dimensions of the master map.

(iii) Build your cities close to the sea, as these are your production centres for boats.

(iv) It is imperative that you enter and name as many provinces as possible and build, build build! As a suggestion, try to build all your settlements four or eight squares apart. This will help when creating large armies to attack other players. War is a very expensive thing – try to be as diplomatic as possible – resources are often better directed towards building settlements; a much better investment!

(v) For the purpose of colonisation, keep your armies to one platoon. Incidentally, a home garrison is not required till you are actually engaged in war.

MISSING KNIGHTS

'Where was the *Avalon* section last month?' I hear you cry. Well, to put it bluntly, I waffled on for too long and subsequently ran out of space. To make up for it, here are the leader tables for both last month and this . . .

JULY

Game	Leader	Points	Title	Game
1	**Borago The Bibulous**	1231	*Knight*	*3*
2	**Frikkon Five Fingers**	1198	*Knight*	*2*
3	**Cogan Lister**	1159	*Knight*	*1*
4	**King D'Susulis Maral**	1032	*Knight*	*4*
5	**Fernorn**	713	*Squire*	*5*

Fernorn, King D'Susulis Maral and Borago The Bibulous have large leads in their own games while other game leaders are being caught by **Torak Mentor** (1150 points in Game Two) and **Simon The Narcolept** (1122 points in Game One). Game Five players are doing well considering the fact they're four times behind the other games. If Fernorn was a player in Game One he would be ninth on that particular game leaderboard. Keep it up!

Congratulations to the Knights, don't let the new title go to your heads now!

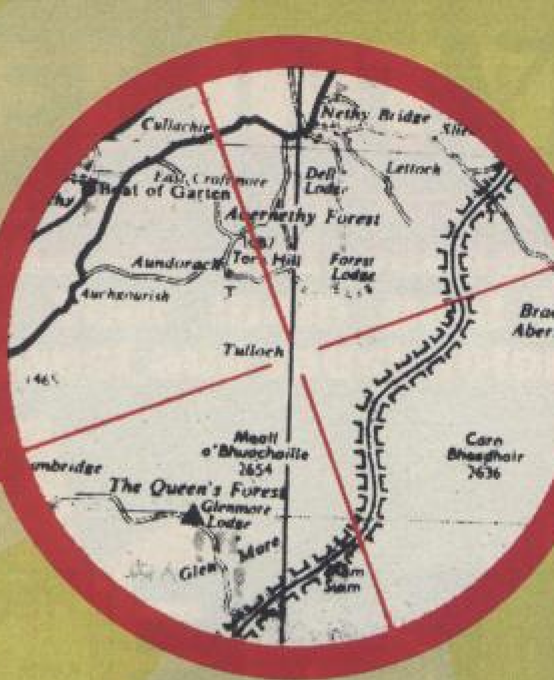
AUGUST

Game	Leader	Points	Title	Game
1	**Frikkon Five Fingers**	1644	*Knight*	*2*
2	**Borago The Bibulous**	1545	*Knight*	*3*
3	**Cogan Lister**	1443	*Knight*	*1*
4	**Faramir**	1324	*Knight*	*4*
5	**Fernorn**	1107	*Knight*	*5*

Well, a fair few movements there. Frikkon Five Fingers leaps into first running for that majestic castle, while in Game Four the top position is seized by Faramir from King D'Susulis Maral by only 11 points. Congratulations to Fernorn, Game Five's first Knight. Fernorn is well ahead of the others in that game.

What's his secret? (Sch . . . – Ed)

FRONTLINE



with Philippa Irving

STALINGRAD

Producer: CCS
Author: Ken Wright
Price: £9.95

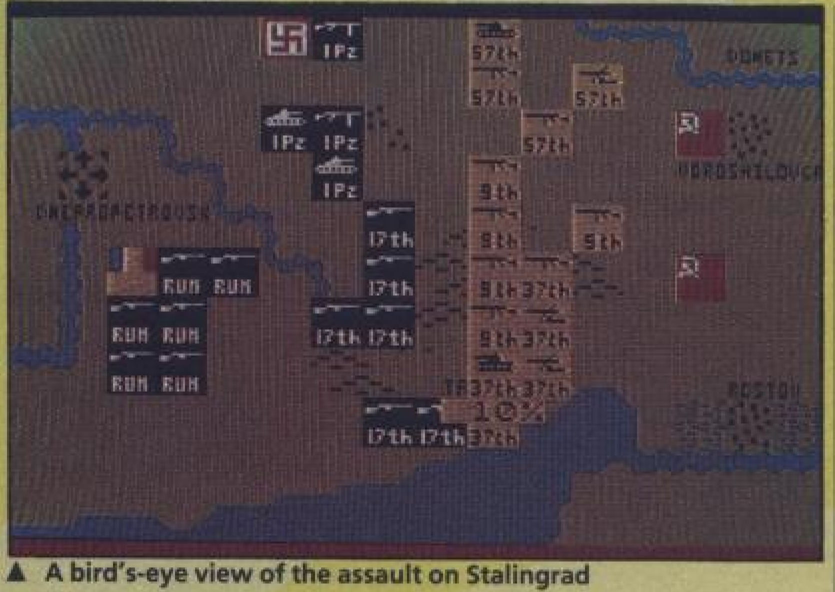
A CRASH Smash

Stalingrad is the latest game by wargaming's only current prolific writer, Ken Wright. It takes up the often-documented campaign on the Eastern Front in the Spring of 1942, when Field Marshal Von Bock led the German Army Group south, into a drive to capture Stalingrad. The war on the Eastern Front had been draining the resources of both armies and, by this stage, it was no longer possible to keep up operations along its extent. Both sides decided to concentrate on the southern sector.

The capture of Stalingrad was intended only to be a stage on the inwards sweep towards the centre of Russia around Moscow. In reality, it proved to be an intractable objective and the whole Russian campaign foundered on it.

The game gives the player command of seven German armies, most consisting of six units. It is set firmly in the mould of the author's previous games (*Yankee, Blitzkrieg, Overlord*), with an increasing trend to what might be called 'system minimalism'; there is no need to take a degree course in the operation of the game. Statistics are thin on the ground and all the player does to issue orders is move units in blocks of three and choose between a handful of generalised attack options. It's a deliberate attempt to emphasise the gameplay itself, rather than distract with superfluous details and hinder with difficult order systems.

The system is essentially the same as that seen in Ken Wright's previous two campaign games, *Blitzkrieg* and *Overlord*. Wargamers who own either will find no surprises in *Stalingrad* and may be tempted to start playing as soon as the game finishes loading. However, a careful reading of the rules and background is strongly advised as a preliminary. There are a few important additions to the system, and, as usual, it's necessary to bring both knowledge and imagination to get the most atmosphere out of the onscreen abstractions.

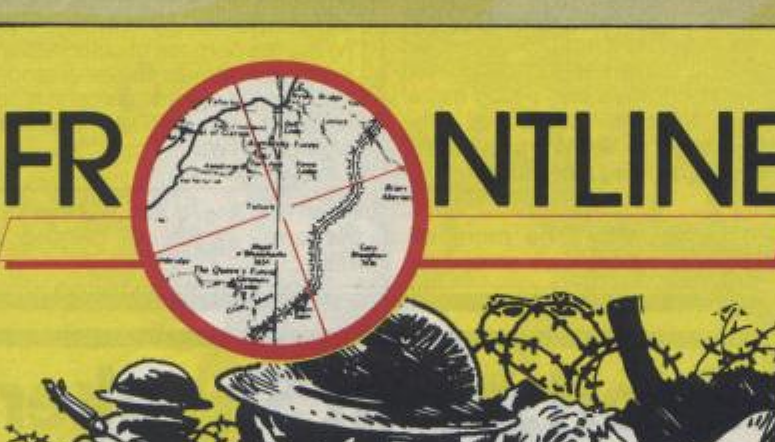


▲ A bird's-eye view of the assault on Stalingrad

The screen map is as attractive as it's possible for a computer 'board' map to be. Terrain is neatly and clearly differentiated, and the names of towns are indicated onscreen. There is certainly something to be said for concentrating on making the screen map self-sufficient and attractive.

There are seven different type of terrain, which carry their own movement cost and advantage or disadvantage for attacker or defender. Unfortunately you can't exploit these to the full as it's too difficult to predict where any unit is going to end up after a movement phase, and the decision about whether or not to

FRONTLINE FORUM



This month's Frontline Forum looks at a major dilema facing every Spectrum wargamer. Can the Spectrum still hold its own when it comes to large and complex strategy games? With the growing popularity of the 16-bit machines are 8-bit computers still the way forward?

Dear Philippa
Thanks for publishing my letter (in Issue 51). I'm sorry if it reads as rather harsh on you but I had just finished playing the game in question and I was not in a good mood.

Recently, I bought a Commodore 64 and disk drive because although the Spectrum can hold its own in arcade games, the strategy games are rather limited, and having visited a Commodore owning friend and seeing the war/strategy games that he had, I was converted. I have got a copy of the Strategic Plus catalogue and the range of games is mindboggling compared to the Spectrum.

I would advise any Spectrum wargamer to invest in a Commodore as well if he really wants to get to grips with his hobby. So henceforth I shall be reading your column in ZZAP! 64.
David Ellingham, Stockton, Cleveland

Sadly, I have to agree with you. In my opinion the Spectrum is unbeatable for sophisticated arcade and arcade adventure games, and has had much more imagination poured into its 48K confines than the flashy, Americanised Commodore will ever have. But quality and quantity of strategic releases available for the Commodore far outstrip the Spectrum selection; not only wargames, but fantasy role-playing games also benefit from the luxury of disk access. However, disk drives are expensive, so are those glossy American games. That, I suspect, is the main obstacle in the path of many Spectrum-owning wargaming enthusiasts.

PI

engage in combat is usually taken out of your hands.

The player, adopting the persona of Field Marshall Von Bock, commands the 1st and 4th Panzer Armies, the 2nd, 6th, 11th and 17th Armies and the Rumanian Army. Apart from the 2nd, the armies are divided into a right and left flank of three units each. The right and left flanks are treated as separate entities for the purposes of orders. The only statistics available for each unit are a rough percentage estimate and an indication of morale.

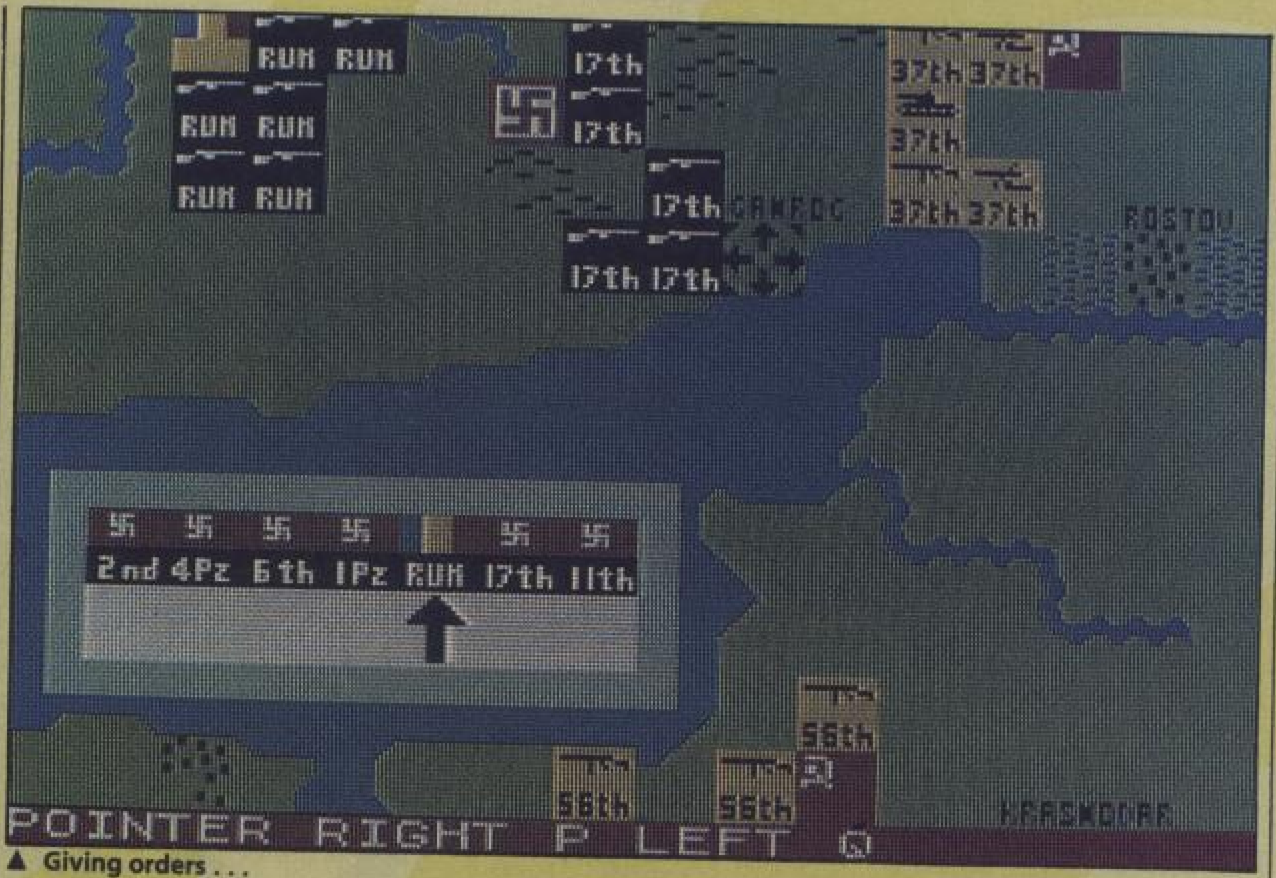
Orders are issued through a series of simple branching menus. Movement and combat orders are given in a single turn, and executed immediately afterwards. In the orders phase, the player can inspect what limited information is available about his units as well as the percentage strength of whatever enemy units are sufficiently in range to appear on the screen.

Having selected a particular army, the player issues movement instructions as in *Blitzkrieg*. Instead of plotting out a straightforward path for each unit, the player must indicate a general line of advance for the centre, right and left flanks of the army. When movement is processed, the three units dot along the landscapes in an unpredictable approximation of these flanks.

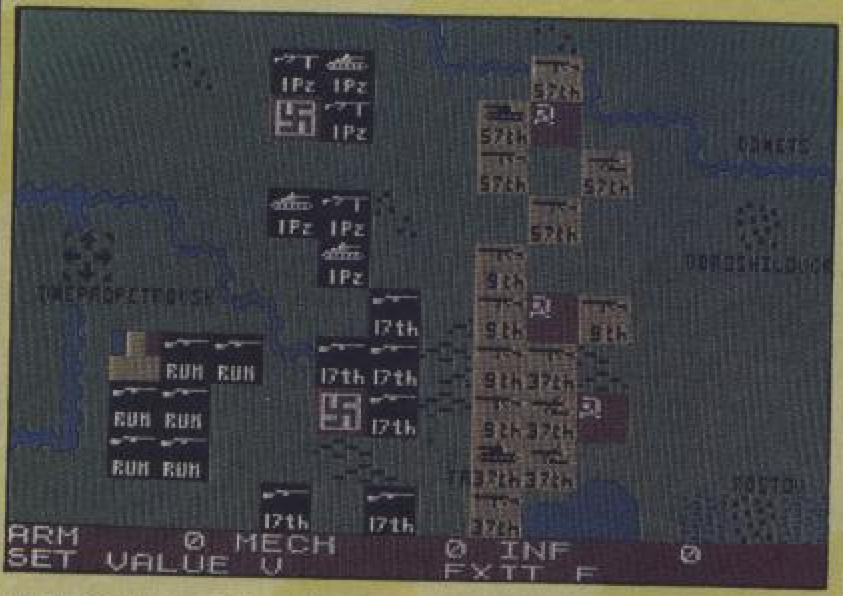
Even after three extensively played games using this system, I still haven't got to grips with it. It seems to carry the notion of reproducing the difficulties of command beyond the borders of frustration.

Combat orders can only be given to the block of three units, in advance of seeing where they will end up. ATTACK means that the units will throw themselves wholeheartedly at any enemy, whether it seems like a good idea or not. Units with a DEFEND order will not attack AND fight back with a bonus added to their effectiveness. But the most common order to give is DISCRETION, which leaves the decision whether or not to engage in combat entirely in the hands of the army commanders. The unsubtle nature of the 'attack' orders leave the player little choice.

Once all orders are entered, movement and combat take place with satisfying speed. Combat is won by flashing units and percentage losses for each side, and is sometimes accompanied by retreat or advance.



▲ Giving orders . . .



▲ The Wehrmacht launches its attack against the Soviet Line

There is a carefully worked out supply network which the player must study; cities link across the map in a chain of supply which is easily broken. Once an army is out of supply, it cannot participate in the replacement phase which takes place every turn. This highly stylised phase allows the player to dish out re-inforcement points from a general pool to all armies in supply. It's very easy to be inattentive to the invisible supply chain, and to find whole armies suddenly wasting away.

There are three difficulty levels, which step upwards sharply. The manual informs the player how to increase the difficulty indefinitely by means of a POKE. Yes – this game can be broken into by pressing the BREAK key, and it cheerfully advertises the fact. This is a refreshing lack of paranoia on the part of CCS!

Dear Philippa

Having subscribed to CRASH since Issue 26, I felt it was high time I made a contribution to your magazine.

I am quite an avid wargamer and frequently battle the computer at the likes of *Vulcan*, *Desert Rats*, *Arnhem*, *Lords Of Midnight*, *Legions Of Death*, etc. Recently, I decided to add to my collection by purchasing *Blitzkrieg*. CRASH Smash, must be good I thought. After the rubbish loading screen I did find a good game. However, does it really merit a CRASH Smash? This suggests that it cannot really be largely improved upon. I believe that *Desert Rats* is a far better game than *Blitzkrieg* (I admit it is only my humble opinion, but I hope others agree), but it did not receive a Smash. Fair enough, it has its faults, but it is much more addictive and wide ranging than *Blitzkrieg* – two player game, six scenarios (eight on the expanded 128K version) and a choice of sides are just a few points to mention.

Both these games (the authors state) contain an orders system which allows the confusing aspects of war units missing each other, surprise attacks etc. However, *Blitzkrieg*'s control system leaves the player hoping for the best. The player has no option but to leave his units milling about, hoping to destroy the enemy and not let any enemy units past. I certainly felt that I did not really have control over my armies and to win I did not really have to use much strategy – I just wished for a little luck. *Blitzkrieg* could also have done with a choice of sides or a two player option.

That brings me to my second point. Why won't wargame authors use the 128K memory available? Ken Wright wrote a page of excuses along with *Blitzkrieg* complaining about the memory restrictions. Why can't he follow R T Smith and produce an expanded version for 128K computers on the B-side of the tape? *Desert Rats* and *Vulcan* both have this and I think that it improves the value for money no end. I may be biased towards R T Smith, but surely this is justified as he has written three great games that I won't become bored with. If R T Smith were to release another game I would buy it, no questions asked. However, a new Ken Wright game. . . .

I would now like to leave the authors alone and speak out for all wargamers who read CRASH, or buy CRASH and flick through to find their favourite couple of pages and . . . then check again, but (scream) no Frontline! What is happening? OK, you will reply that there are no games to review. How about reviewing or re-reviewing some old wargames. CCS sent me a pamphlet full of games, but I would rather see a review before spending a small fortune. (CCS's *East Front* for next ish!) Perhaps Frontline could extend and involve strategy simulations – not just wargames. The *Boxing Manager* review was a step in the right direction (have a look at *Formula One* by CRL and you may be pleasantly surprised). Let's be rewarded for our £1.25. Let's have a bigger Frontline!

Simon Deans, High Wycombe, Bucks

I'm interested to find that I'm not the only one confused by the orders system in Blitzkrieg, Overlord *and now* Stalingrad. *My high rating of all of these games reflects the fact that other aspects of them are excellent, and about as good as you're likely to get on the Spectrum wargaming front. The same can be said about the R T Smith games (I didn't review* Desert Rats, *so can't answer for it), and I agree that the amount of game this author gives you for your money is greater. I understand that Ken Wright's philosophy is to invest most of the memory into the quality of the computer opponent; but I agree that everyone would welcome expanded 128K versions. The publishing houses seem to have given up on the 128K.*

It's frustrating for me, too, when I can't produce Frontline. In future I shall try to keep a stock of back-catalogue games, as you suggest – and as I do for Manoeuvres in ZZAP! 64.

PI

The game's main strength is the quality of the computer opponent. On the third level, the only way to win is to outplay the opponent, consistently and constantly making better decisions.

I have the same misgivings about this game that I had about *Overlord*; I find it so difficult to control the units in a sensible manner that I'm unable to concentrate on the necessary decision-making and strategy. There is something frustrating about having so little control in a game which is beautifully designed and undoubtedly clever. You tell the units to fight if they want to, but only if it's not too much bother . . . and then you sit back and watch.

Nevertheless, it is possible to get used to the system and there's no doubt that it makes for very streamlined, absorbing gameplay. There are no ungainly pauses or ragged edges. The variety of strategy available is enough to hold interest through many successive games. This is another serious wargamer's wargame which is also accessible to the newcomer, and everyone but the most hardened arcade addict should enjoy playing it.

Presentation 93%
The normal large CCS box, containing glossy rules with a background story and pictures

Graphics 80%
Good graphical interpretation of playing board layout

Rules 81%
All aspects of the orders system are explained, though it's sometimes difficult to find a specific item

Authenticity 79%
The heavy abstractions affect the atmosphere, but the details are correct

Playability 92%
Easy to pick up, and very absorbing

OVERALL 90%
Another highly recommended game in the same mould as Wright's *Blitzkrieg* and *Overlord*

FIRST PAST THE POST

Producer: Cult
Authors: Adam, John and William Parker
Price: £1.99

I rubbed my hands in glee when I took a first look at *First Past The Post* . . . No complex wargame this: just another example of that rare but persistent breed – the text-based strategy game.

The player is in competition with three other trainers whose performance records can be called up. You are already in possession of a stable of race worthy horses.

Each meeting runs three races: the one mile, the two mile and the three mile. Before the race starts, there is an opportunity to see the odds placed on each horse by the bookies and to place one bet. The odds assigned may follow a logic internal to the computer, but to me they seemed completely random.

The race itself is run in glorious dual-pixel animation, with your own horses highlighted in white and those of the rival trainers an anonymous black. They gallop at leisurely speed along a practically featureless course, generating a boredom that is almost unbearable. In the end, I resorted to reading a book while the race was on.

If a white horse has been frozen mid-gallop at the finishing post, then it's one of yours and you've won. Unrealistically, no credit is given for second or third



place. If you happened to back the winner, you get the appropriate pay out. If one of your horses won, you get some prize money. Then it's onto the next race.

At the end of the day, a league table of trainers is shown. Points are awarded on the basis of an unexplained system. Next, the player has the opportunity to sell a horse from the stable. A single horse is also offered for sale, with a price tag attached. Little judgement is called for; the animal is an unknown quantity, with no history.

The horses carry their records on into subsequent meetings which is when the game first calls for a degree of strategic thought. The logic is basic – keep entering horses for the races they've shown they can do well at.

Maybe something interesting happens at the end of the season and perhaps variety and humour pop up unexpectedly if you persevere for long enough. After an interminable game, however, I got the impression that it was like this all the way through. It certainly failed to inspire any spark of interest or curiosity in me. The absence of incentive to play *First Past the Post* for more than an hour leaves it with nothing to recommend itself, even at a budget price.

Presentation 60%
Onscreen presentation is smooth and attractive, but there is a complete lack of written material

Graphics 55%
Few graphics to consider, but the animated race not exactly high art

Rules 20%
Completely inadequate – no explanation of the principles of horse racing and stable management, and barely enough information on how to play the game

Playability 40%
Easy enough to play, but the race sequence holds things up

OVERALL 32%
A non-starter




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ATARI ST



BACKGROUND

News of Atari's first steps into the world of the 16-bit home computer market came in the summer of 1985 when, following the launch of Commodore's Amiga, Jack Tramiel announced the impending release of the ST in direct competition to Commodore's new wonder-machine.

The ST, according to rumour, had been in development even before Tramiel started at Atari, but apart from the internal hardware designs, little else had been produced. An operating system was still needed, as was a usable front end and some form of BASIC.

The built-in software used is a version of CPM/68K, renamed TOS (Tramiel Operating System). A Graphics Environment Manager (GEM) was purchased from IBM, and the BASIC was hastily obtained from Metacomco, a British 68000 company, who were also responsible for AmigaDOS.

Atari were so keen to release the machine that the first production models required the user to load the 200K TOS from disk before it could be used. Newer machines have a de-bugged version of TOS on ROM.

Late 1985 saw the first appearance of the standard Atari 520 ST in Britain. Unfortunately, it also needed an external disk drive and a colour or monochrome monitor, as no TV modulator was present. This didn't stop the machine selling in substantial quantities, mainly due to Atari's fierce marketing campaign.

Since then, the original version has been superseded by the STM with TV modulator, STFM with modulator and built-in disk drive, and the 1040 ST with one megabyte (1000K) memory.



SPECIFICATIONS

All versions utilise the Motorola 68000 16/32 bit internal processor, which runs at a clock speed of 8 MHz (theoretically, slightly faster than the Amiga). The screen display has three modes of resolution: 640 x 400 pixels, which can only be used in conjunction with a monochrome monitor, 640 x 200 pixels with four colours onscreen, and the normal 'games' mode of 320 x 200 pixels with 16 colours. All colour selections are made from an internal palette of 512.

Musically, the ST is poorly catered for, since the sound chip is similar to the one used in the Spectrum 128K machines and Amstrad CPC range. There are three separate eight-octave sound channels and a separate white noise channel. However, the addition of MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) ports allow direct access to any MIDI compatible synthesisers.

THE STORY SO FAR

At present there are well over 150000 STs in the UK – about 80000 were sold in 1987 and Atari are hoping to double that figure for this year's sales, obviously December will provide a large chunk of that figure. There are many models available covering all enviroments of use; predominently home entertainment, small business and large business. Atari are spending over £4 million on marketing the ST in 1988, as opposed to only £1½ million last year. This year Atari are splitting their budget, 70/30, in favour of the business sector – the software and magazine base has already been formed for the entertainment sector – and hope to attract small businesses in large numbers (something which no other manufacturer has succeeded in doing). Last year was very successful for Atari, with a turnover of almost £30 million; they had finally hit success again since their penetration of the home computer market in the early Eighties with the Atari 800.

In September of last year, not only did they drop the price of their STs by £100, Atari also launched their CD-ROM at £399 – transferring data to an ST at 1.5 Mbits per second. Though it doubles the price of an Atari ST package it does represent terribly good value. Its main problem is that Atari have a problem in targeting it at any specific market – thus the lack in software. Demand for this new 16-bit phenomenomgrew so much that, after an aggressive (and very prosperous) TV marketing campaign, Atari cleaned out of STs for three weeks in November. By December 87 the ST was really catching the eye of the games machine buying public – in fact, it was WH Smiths's best seller throughout the christmas season.

THE FUTURE

Into 1988, Atari plan to manufacture one million STs worldwide (with almost 400000 for Germany alone!). Things were obviously going along quite well till March when, not unsurprisingly due to a rise in the price of silicon chips, Atari put the £100, which was cut from their STs in September 88, back on rising it to £399 (keyboard, disk drive and TV modulator). Atari tempted the potential customer with a gift of over £400 (£413.94 to be exact) of free software. The offer only lasts till September 1 of this year so you'd better move fast if you want to take advantage of this tempting package. But don't get your cheque books out too fast, as it is generally thought that Atari will drop the price of the ST either for Christmas or in January 1989 – and after all, who wants 22 old games when the ST has one of the fast growing 16-bit software bases. As well as the Spectrum, Commodore 64 and Amstrad (although this is rapidly diminishing in popularity) an extra format has now been formed – almost every software producer is releasing an ST version of all their products. And with Atari themselves giving their ST the same amount of backing – with transputers, blitters and double-sided disk drives – the ST seems to be THE expanding and expandable computer.

AMIGA



BACKGROUND

Early in 1985 the ailing Commodore company bought the rights to the Amiga project from ex-Atari man Jay Miner, much to the displeasure of Jack Tramiel, who had only recently bought Atari.

With rumours of an Atari 16-bit based machine, Commodore were under duress to release the Amiga and, as with the ST, the first batch to surface were rushed, having a bug-ridden operating system that loaded in from the 880K disk drive.

While Atari targetted their machine at the lower end of the market, the Amiga, complete with impressive graphics and multi-tasking capabilities was pushed as a business machine-cum-executive toy. It is generally regarded that Commodore got it completely wrong, and while the Amiga floundered in the no-man's land of the 'serious amateur', Atari's ST was busy building up a strong public following and a similarly large software base.

Initially, the Amiga appeared as the A1000, looking every bit the serious computer, complete with a colour monitor perched atop the hardware case, separate keyboard and a mouse. Sales were rather poor and the decision was made to release the more compact and considerably cheaper A500, which appeared in the autumn of 86.

The A500 saw the first real attempt at taking Atari on at their own game, with the firmware, keyboard and disk drive contained in one case. Unfortunately a standard TV modulator was still in omission, leaving the necessity of a monitor. A TV modulator is now available, but it'll still cost an extra £25.

SPECIFICATIONS

The Amiga uses the Motorola 68000 16/32 bit processor, running at a clock speed of 7.14 MHz. This is a touch slower than the ST, but more than makes up for this deficiency by the addition of multi-tasking custom chips which handle many graphics features on their own, leaving the main processor to run the bulk of the program. Screen resolution has four modes: 640 x 400, 640 x 200 and 320 x 400 with 16 colours (chosen from a palette of 4096 colours), and 320 x 200 which can support up to 32 colours onscreen. There's also a 'hold and modify' (HAM) mode which displays all 4096 colours onscreen, although it only works with static pixels.

Musically, the Amiga is superb, with four, nine-octave FM stereo sound channels, and a novel built-in speech synthesiser. The A500 also has eight hardware sprites, hardware scrolling and a bit blitter for the high-speed transfer of data.

THE STORY SO FAR

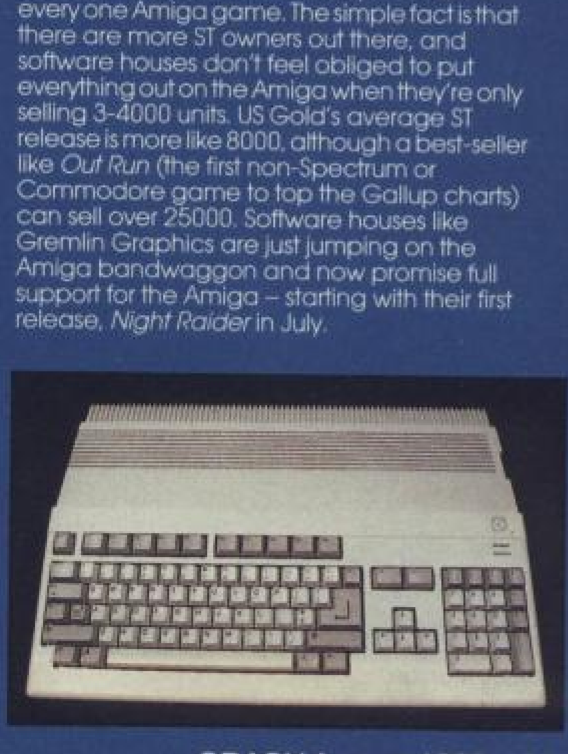
The Amiga's sales were marginally stunted in January of this year when *The Independent* picked up on a new breed of computer vandal. The new 'yuppie vandal' originated from Switzerland and destroyed all Amiga disks in its path. Basically, the 'virus' (as it became known) disk was inserted in to a computer, the wrecking program copied itself to RAM, and then any other readable disks inserted before the computer was turned off would be affected by the wrecking program which would copy itself back onto a disks. Not surprisingly the virus spread like a . . . well . . . a virus. Thankfully the whole scandal was quickly exposed and an antidote was found. And thanks to the efforts of major distributors like Silica Shop (who would copy the antidote on to a disk for you free of charge) the virus has almost been eradicated – although PC owners beware, it has risen its ugly head on your machines, and will completely wreck a hard disk.

The whole affair may have been bad for those affected, but it did give the Amiga very heavy press coverage, and thus brought it in to the minds of the man off the street.

THE FUTURE

Present estimates put the number of Amigas in the UK at over 50000, although it's probably much higher now due to the recent price drop to £399 (keyboard, 1Mb disk drive and mouse) – although, unlike the Atari ST, you'll need a modulator for use with a TV. This should also help move programmers to producing more original software for the Amiga. Due to the extra capabilites, programming takes far longer on the Amiga therefore up until now most programmers have developed the product on a 1040ST and just transferred the data to an Amiga, port-to-port.

But, as recent figures show, software houses are still producing more ST products than Amiga. US Gold have around three ST products for every one Amiga game. The simple fact is that there are more ST owners out there, and software houses don't feel obliged to put everything out on the Amiga when they're only selling 3-4000 units. US Gold's average ST release is more like 8000, although a best-seller like *Out Run* (the first non-Spectrum or Commodore game to top the Gallup charts) can sell over 25000. Software houses like Gremlin Graphics are just jumping on the Amiga bandwaggon and now promise full support for the Amiga – starting with their first release, *Night Raider* in July.



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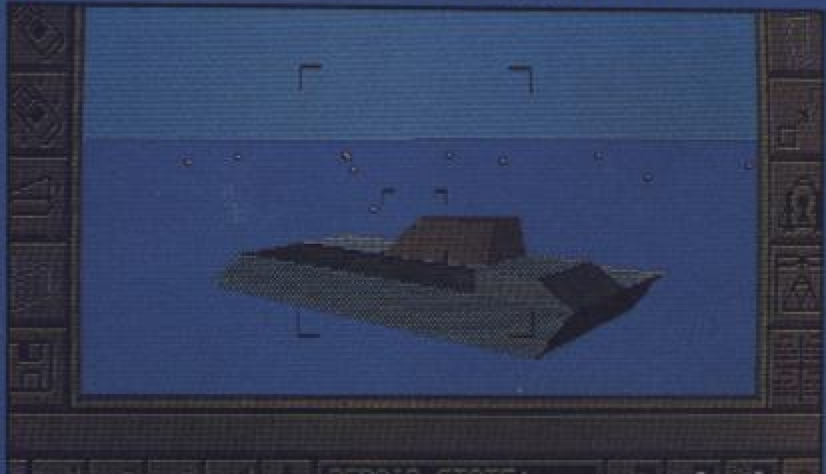
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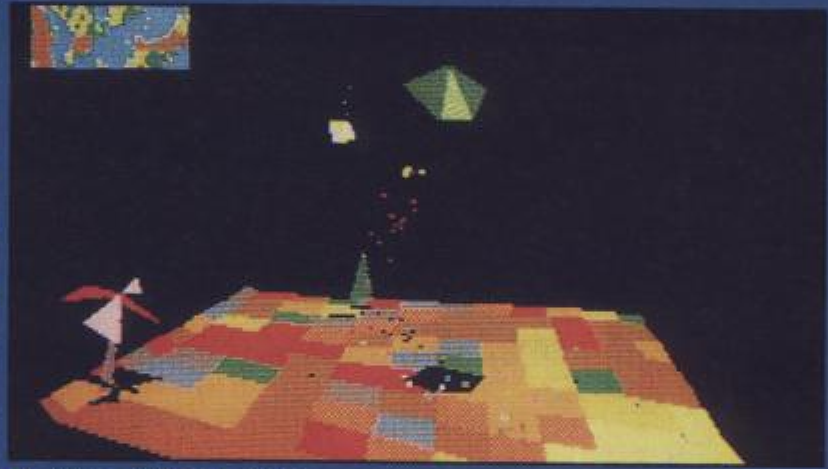
STATE OF THE ART?

Are these 16-bit computers all they're cracked up to be? Are all the shouts of 'Wow, that's amazing!' coming from THE GAMES MACHINE justified? NICK ROBERTS, STUART WYNNE and DOMINIC HANDY had a good rummage through TGM's filing cabinet and came up with a few games that show the Atari ST and the Amiga at their best . . .

One of the best arcade strategy games available to ST owners is Infogrames *Captain Blood*. As an intergalactic traveller you must journey around the galaxy and collect clones of yourself; fail to do this and you grow weaker and die. The graphics and sound are perfect examples of what the ST can do. The Jean-Michel Jarre music at the start is amazing and the use of colour cycling on the hyperspace and destroy planet options simply takes you out of this world! Unfortunately the game suffers in playability domain – the difficulty of actually communicating with the alien clones makes the game frustrating after a while. Another state of the art ST game is *Carrier Command*, by those master Spectrum programmers Realtime Software (*Starglider*). This has the player in control of an aircraft carrier, with four fighter aircraft and amphibious tanks at your disposal in this arcade/tactical/strategy game. The smoothness of the solid 3-D graphics and the depth of gameplay defy belief. Similarly impressive graphically is Rainbird's

▼ **Rainbird's *Carrier Command* has to be played to be believed**





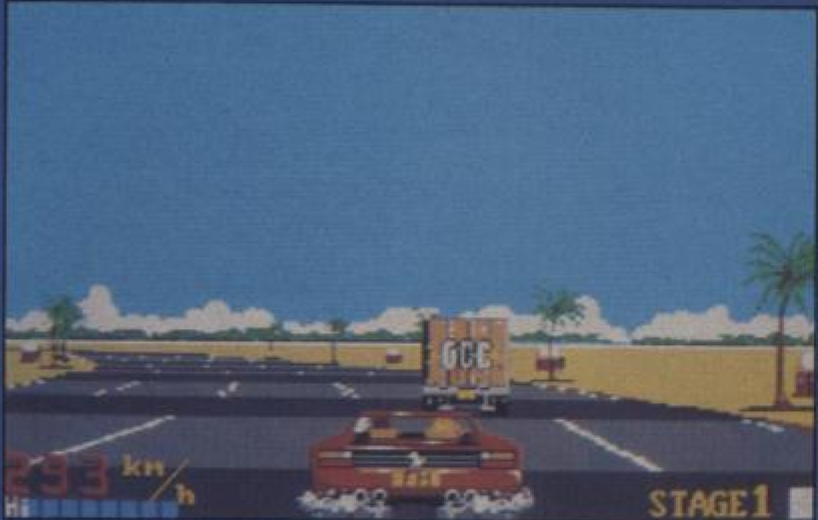
▲ ***Virus* on the Atari ST**

Virus (the Spectrum version is reviewed elsewhere in this issue) which is very close to the original Archimedes program, *Zarch*. By comparison with *Carrier Command*, however, the gameplay seems a little repetitive.

'Nice graphics shame about the game' seems to be the general feeling towards 16-bit software. Many games that originally appeared on the Spectrum seem to lose all their playability on the conversion. One game that certainly has turned out well on the ST, though, is the arcade hit *Out Run*. The ST version has all the along have been faithfully reproduced from the arcade machine but if you find that they distract you, you can change them for realistic sound effects. The ST *Out Run* is one of the most playable versions, and with a bit of practice you can get close to completing a course.

The price of 16-bit software seems to vary tremendously. For a full price game on the ST you can expect to pay from around £15 to over £40 and budget software is usually just under £10. Amiga software is similar in price. For the average Spectrum owner this may

▼ **Racing fun from US Gold**



playability of the Spectrum with the added attractions of colour and excellent tunes. The car moves along very smoothly with none of the scrolling problems that the Spectrum had, and all the backgrounds are colourful and detailed. It still has the annoying multiload though, and the car comes to an abrupt halt as you enter each new level. The tunes that play whilst you are zooming seem a great jump from prices like £7.99 for a full price game and budget titles at £1.99 but you have to remember that 16-bit games are on disk, usually of a much higher quality and take far longer to program.

Finally, we come to *Beyond The Ice Palace*. Of course the layout of the ST version is identical to the Spectrum but the graphics have much more detail in them and are

▼ **Elite: striving for success in the 16-bit market**



packed full of colour. It seems to me that it is harder to control the main character on the ST. No matter how hard you try to manoeuvre him into the correct position he wanders about all over the place. Due to this the game does get terribly annoying!

The ST is an excellent machine for upgraders from the Spectrum, as with the Spectrum you get a very expandable computer with the cheapest software in its market.

And so we come to the Amiga. If you look more deeply at the technical specifications of the Amiga, it soon becomes obvious that it has a fair few extra capabilities and becomes even more apparent when you look at games which have been developed on the Amiga, and not just ported from the ST.

All ST games are very similar on Commodore's wonder beast, so there are very few games which actually catch your eye more than the ST versions.

The number one Amiga game at the moment is undoubtedly *F/A-18 Interceptor* by Electronic Arts; a futuristic-looking flight simulator with solid 3-D graphics. Once you're past the fantastic atmospheric title tune (very *Top Gun*-ish) and the annoying security codes you enter a computerised world of solid 3-D graphics and challenging gameplay. If you didn't know better you would think that you were really there! There are various sights to be seen in the game which include The Golden Gate Bridge and Alcatraz. Once you have qualified (by taking off from an aircraft carrier and carrying out a complex landing procedure) there are various missions for you to attempt. Have you ever flown upside down under a bridge at 909 knots? It's got to be seen to be believed! The only thing is that it's a bit too hard to qualify. You have to have the correct speed and height to make a successful landing on the carrier; you usually land, but go shooting off the deck and into the sea! *F/A-18 Interceptor* is undoubtedly the best flight simulator seen on a microcomputer. It's got everything; graphics, playability and superb animation.

Bubble Bobble on the Spectrum was dubbed the most playable arcade conversion of 1987 and earned itself 90% in CRASH – the Amiga version is just as playable and even cuter. All the characters are excellently drawn and animated in full colour. The backgrounds are just as detailed and vibrant. There is the classic arcade game tune constantly playing in the background and the usual impressive jumping sound effects. The addictive qualities of this game go right off the end of the scale. This really is just like the arcade machine.

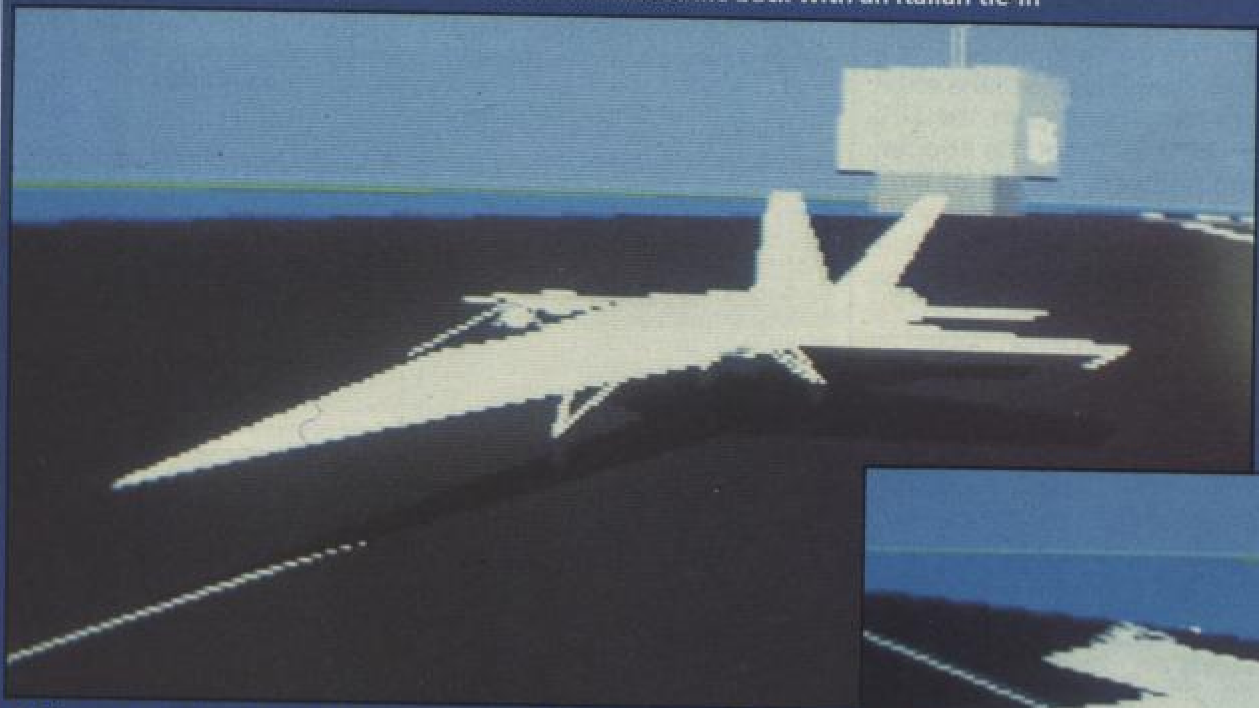
As far as simulations go, the Amiga seems to win hands down. As well as a flight sim Electronic Arts also venture onto the Grand Prix track for Amiga owners. *Ferrari Formula One* is the ultimate in track sims – and definitely not for avid arcade-only players. As the green flag drops you can almost feel the tension around you as other drivers weave and dodge for a good game position. And, unlike most other racing sims, your opponents are also fallible – slowing down for corners and spinning off the track, just like you and me. Sound is also used to full effect; the drill noises in the pits are fantastic. Real race fans will love it.

At present there's no doubt that the ST would be the sensible buy – it's got a steadily high software base and good retail and trade support – especially with a free £400+ software pack. But, the Amiga seems to be catching everyone's eye at the moment and software support is undoubtedly improving. The only trouble is that the high street chains are still wary of stocking Amiga products.

As with all computers, the hardware is only as good as the software it runs. The Amiga has the quality product, but the ST has the quantity.



▲ **Electronic Arts strike back with an Italian tie-in**



▲ **The greatest flight sim to ever appear on a microcomputer?**





RUN IT AGAIN!

Armchair sports fans or strategy freaks. Call them what you will. One of the most prosperous products a mail order company could ever produce is a sports strategy game. Most of the majors have kept out of this genre (only Addictive Games continue), but what they're missing is one of the most dedicated and loyal computer gaming groups in the UK. Some of us dream of managing our own favourite soccer, American football or cricket team and with the aid of your Spectrum it's possible for your dreams to come true – well, almost. Ace sportsman and all round sports fan PHIL KING takes a look at the top sports strategy games around at the moment . . .

ON THE BENCH

Producer: Cult
Price: £1.99

On The Bench is a text-only soccer management game featuring four divisions and is very up-to-date – even the newly-introduced promotion playoffs are featured. The player can choose to manage any one of 22 teams, though he always starts in the depths of Division 4. The game can be customised to your own requirements with a useful option allowing you to change the names of the players as well as teams.

Players in the same division may be bought directly at a price set by the selling team – they may also be sold to raise extra cash. The team is initially given an overdraft limit of £250000. If this is exceeded, the bank will automatically sell off some of the team's players.

Before each match, training may be given to strengthen any part of the team, or the whole lot if it needs it. The players are selected for the match along with one substitute. During the match, a clock counts the minutes played. A screen display gives a current match run-down of players, scorers and anyone that's been booked or sent off.

After the match, the results of the team's division are shown. They appear very slowly, followed by an even longer wait for the new league positions.

The program suffers from slowness and a general lack of control over the team's performance. Due to little involvement there is a clear lack of atmosphere. Only two pounds, though.

Overall ***50%***

▼ **'Ere we go, 'ere we go, 'ere we go!**



TEST MASTER

Producer: E & J
Price: £8.95

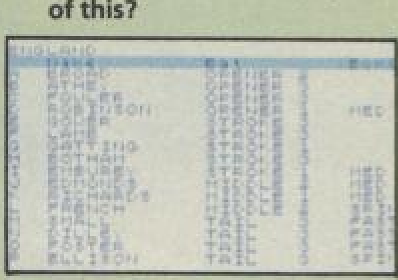
If you think one day cricket is boring (which I don't'!) then you'd better avoid *Test Master*, again from E & J. The game is very similar to *Cricket Master* but is a simulation of a complete five day test match. The game is just like going to see every day of a test match – inevitably tedium soon sets in.

Most options are identical to those in *Cricket Master*. An extra feature allows you to declare your score if you're winning and running short of time. There is also a light meter; if the light gets too dim, the batting side can choose to stop play till it improves.

There are six and a half computer hours of playing time per day and this is reduced after each over, depending on how fast the bowler is. The game takes absolutely ages to play and, like the real thing, is a lot less exciting than one day cricket.

Overall ***48%***

▼ **Could you stand five days of this?**



FOOTBALL MANAGER 2

Producer: Addictive Games
Price: £9.99

Only last issue (79%) CRASH looked at Kevin Toms's sequel to the all-conquering *Football Manager*. *Football Manager 2*'s extra features include the exact positioning of players on the field and the option to make substitutions at half-time.

are made. The finance screen shows the gate receipts, wages bill and overheads. In addition to the championship and FA Cup, the team also gets to play in the League Cup.

Although there aren't that many more options, the general quality of programming and presentation

▼ **Whatever is Whelan doing in goal?**



The graphical portrayal of the match is a great improvement over the original, which was slow and unrealistic.

Players may be bought and sold on the transfer market where bids

is much better than the original's. The game really holds your interest and is definitely the best of the sports strategy genre.

Overall ***85%***

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONS

Producer: E & J
Price: £7.95

Other soccer management games are based on the English League and the FA Cup, but *European Champions* involves 32 national teams trying to win the European Championship – yes, England could finally do it!

Before you can take part in the Championship Finals, your team must qualify by winning its group of four teams. As in real life friendlies can be played to build up a team's fitness and morale.

Each of the 22 squad players has three attributes: tackling ability, skill rating and goal scoring potential.

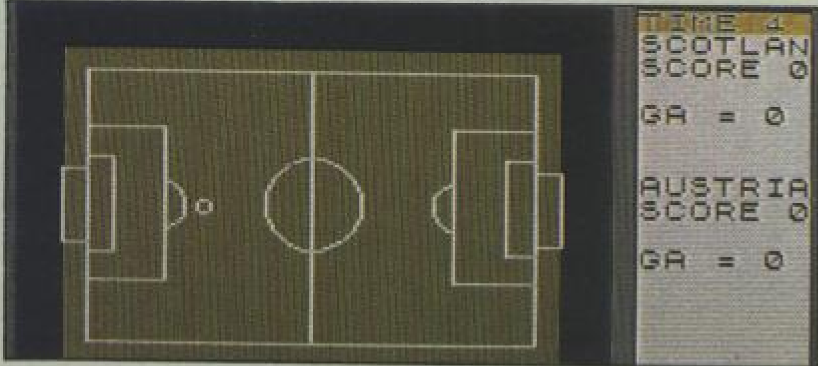
In addition to your chosen 11, five additional substitutes must be selected. This allows for the extra strategy of making tactical substitutions.

Your team can play a short passing, neutral or long ball game, and decide to be defensive, average or attacking. Both these options alter the strategy of the match.

The graphical display of the match is extremely simple (only the ball is shown) and time consuming, but at least you can see how the team (or the ball) is doing. This feature, along with the potential for substitution strategy, makes *European Champions* far more exciting than many other results-only games.

Overall 70%

▼ **Spot the ball**



CRICKET MASTER

Producer: E & J
Price: £7.95

If cricket fans are feeling left out of this footballing strategy extravaganza, then think again because E & J haven't forgotten you. *Cricket Master* simulates limited overs (definable from 40 to 60) one day international cricket.

The team of openers, stroke players, fast bowlers, spin bowlers etc, must be picked from 16 players, ratable from one to three.

Once the team is selected, the match can begin. When his team is fielding, the bowler can alter his own bowling line and move the field into positions of his liking. Bowling and fielding is automatic and the minimalist graphics show the fielders and a rough guide of where the ball travels. Underneath the graphic display, text messages flash up describing how the ball was hit, how many runs were scored plus other useful facts.

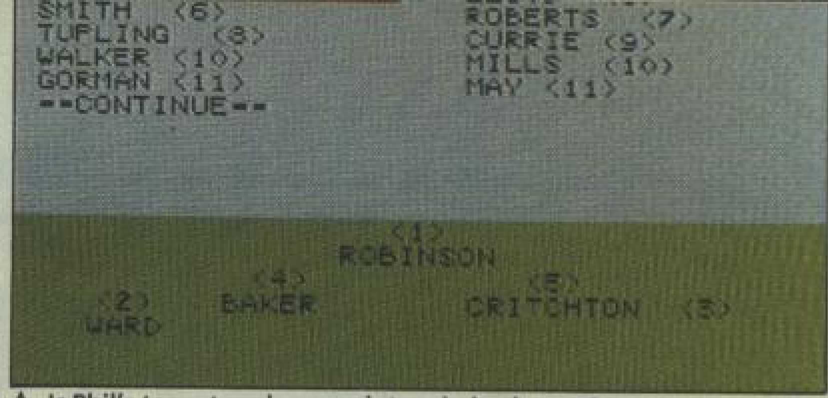
The batting side can choose how aggressively the batsmen play. And for added realism, on the fifth and sixth balls of an over, the player can choose to run a single to keep the best batsman facing the bowler for the next over.

▼ **An action-packed day at the cricket pavilion**



As with managing a real cricket team there is little else to do, especially during play itself. This tends to be a problem with cricket simulations in general. The various strategic options are an improvement on most games of this type, but the lack of a two player mode is disappointing. However, cricket fans will probably like it as there are very few cricket strategies to choose from.

Overall 60%



▲ **Is Phil's team tough enough to win both cups?**

THE DOUBLE

Producer: Scanitron
Price: £10.95

Of course every football fan knows, 'the double' is when a club wins both the FA Cup and the League Championship in the same season. Scanitron have tried to create the year long battle against all odds, in their game of the same name. The game includes many menus which allow the player to manage all the aspects of any of 66 football teams.

One thousand players are on show, with a small amount available for transfer after the eighth week of the season. Notification of forthcoming transfers is given two weeks in advance, allowing the manager to send a scout to watch an interesting player. The scout (a very likable and useful chap) reports on that player's performance and estimates his value, allowing you to make a sensible bid when he comes up for sale.

The way transfers are handled is one of the strengths of *The Double* – allowing you to build a team excelling in all departments. The program uses real players' names; I was amused to see Ian Rush valued at only half a million pounds! Every week a very slow pseudo teleprinter scratches out ALL the league results, and can become VERY irritating.

Sadly, there's no graphical display of the match. Being able to see how your players are getting on really stirs inner feelings (no matter how naff the graphics may be!). *The Double* contains many interesting features not used in other football strategy games, and also presents a reasonable challenge. It's not a bad game, but there's much room for improvement.

Overall 56%

HEADCOACH

Producer: Addictive Games
Price: £2.99

Of all the sports to be imported into the UK over the past ten years, American football has been the most successful. Addictive's *Headcoach* puts you on the sideline of England's second most popular American sport (after basketball).

As the head coach of an up-and-coming team, you must try and build up a group of muscular meanies tough enough to win their division, get through to the playoffs and, hopefully, make it to the final objective: the Superbowl.

The player can choose to manage any of 24 NFL teams (what happened to the other four?). Teams consist of three squads: offensive, defensive and a special team for kicking. After looking at the players on sale, it's time to select the team for the match (pretty unrealistic, as normally all the players are on hand).

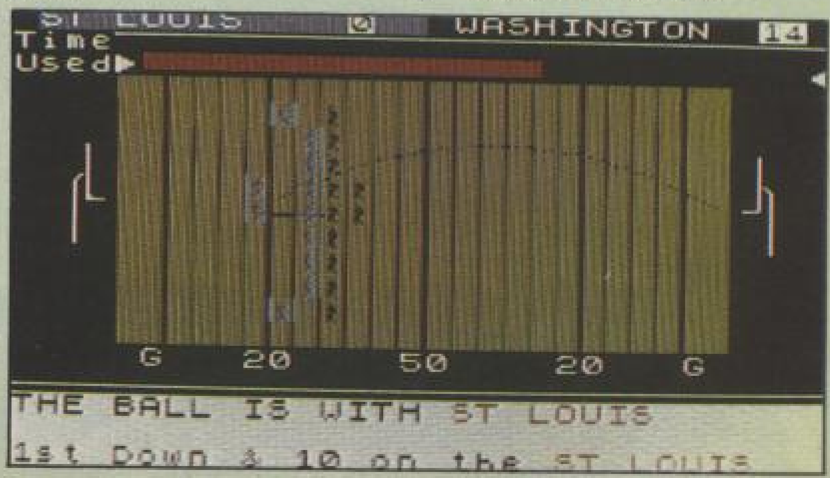
On the field, the player can choose between three offensive and defensive plays, and a field goal attempt (no punt option). This is where *Headcoach* really fails, as the real sport involves dozens of various recognised plays, as well as scope for specially designed moves.

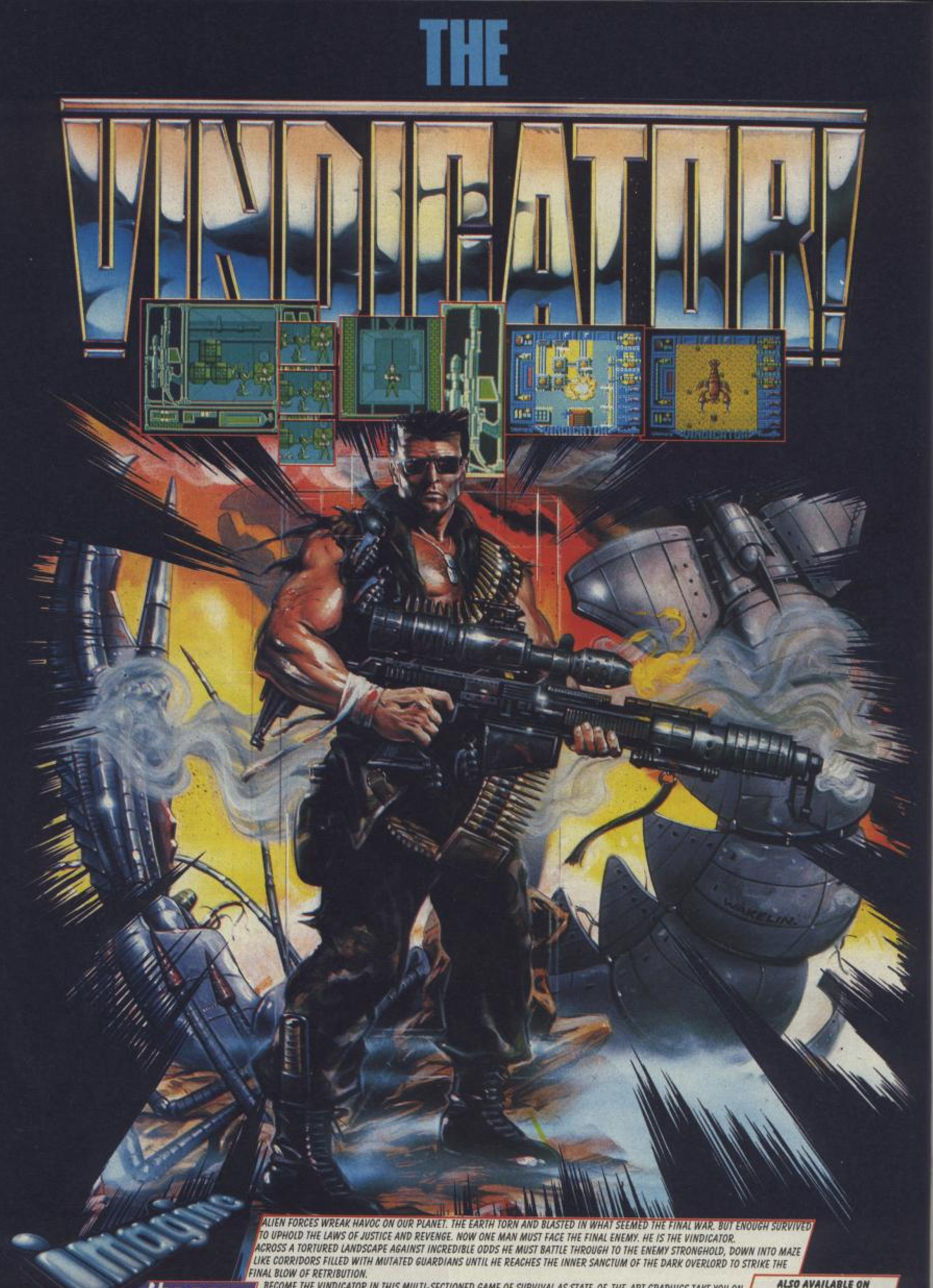
The team in possession is allowed two downs (or plays) in which to make ten yards (there are four downs in the real sport). This supposedly speeds up the game, but inevitably it leads to a very restrictive and (usually) low-scoring game.

Overall, *Headcoach* is a very inaccurate simulation. Even hardened fans of the sport (like myself) would be better off leaving it alone. *Headcoach* has a large following already, but with such a lack of realism it is very hard to see how anyone could gain the real pleasure and thrill of American football from playing it.

Overall 28%

▼ **There must be more to the Superbowl than this**




THE
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Imagine
..the name of the game
ALIEN FORCES WREAK HAVOC ON OUR PLANET. THE EARTH TORN AND BLASTED IN WHAT SEEMED THE FINAL WAR. BUT ENOUGH SURVIVED TO UPHOLD THE LAWS OF JUSTICE AND REVENGE. NOW ONE MAN MUST FACE THE FINAL ENEMY. HE IS THE VINDICATOR.
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Reviews

NIGHT RAIDER

Producer: **Gremlin Graphics**
Retail price: **£12.99 cassette, £14.99 disk**
Authors: **David Pridmore and Greg Holmes**

The sinking of the German battleship, the Bismarck, was one of the biggest coups of World War II. In May 1941, Norwegian secret agents alerted British forces of the position of the Bismarck. The British subsequently sent forces in search of the Bismarck and attacked it, damaging its rudder and leaving it a sitting duck. To sink the ship, a new American prototype torpedo plane was brought in – the Grumman Avenger.

The player takes the role of the crew of this plane and can select various screens relating to each of its four members. The plane starts on the deck of the Ark Royal; but before taking off, you need to ensure that the throttle and instruments are set at the correct levels. The engineer screen shows the appropriate gauges and levers.

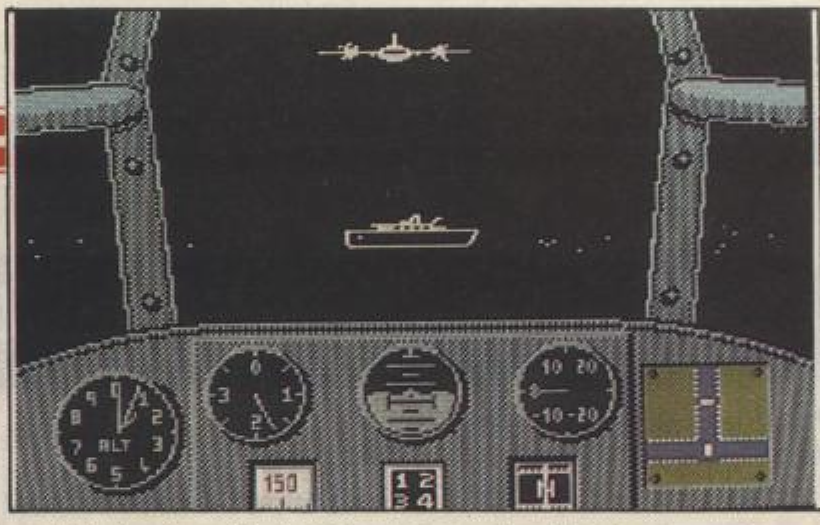
Once airborne, the action is viewed from the cockpit with wire-frame graphics in vanishing point perspective. Enemy planes attack the Avenger and must be shot down before they cause too much damage. The player may also switch to the rear gunner's screen allowing him to shoot pursuing planes.

The Ark Royal is continually in danger from German E-boats and U-boats and must be protected by the Avenger. The positions of planes and boats can be viewed on the navigator's screen. A course can be plotted by moving a cursor on the map. The direction of the cursor is shown by a marker on the compass on the pilot's screen.

The engineer's screen can also be accessed during flight to alter the throttle setting or the fuel mixture and adjust other levers controlling the landing gear, arrester and wing lock. Ammunition and fuel are both limited and extra supplies can only be obtained by returning to the Ark Royal.

The ultimate aim of the Avenger is to sink the Bismarck with a torpedo. To enable the torpedo to skim across the water the plane needs to fly at low altitude. A direct hit will ensure the sinking of the Bismarck and a successful mission.

Before attempting a mission, the player can practise any part of the game such as taking off, landing, flying and sinking the Bismarck. There is a choice between five missions of varying difficulty.



▲ A bewildering array of gauges and levers

PHIL

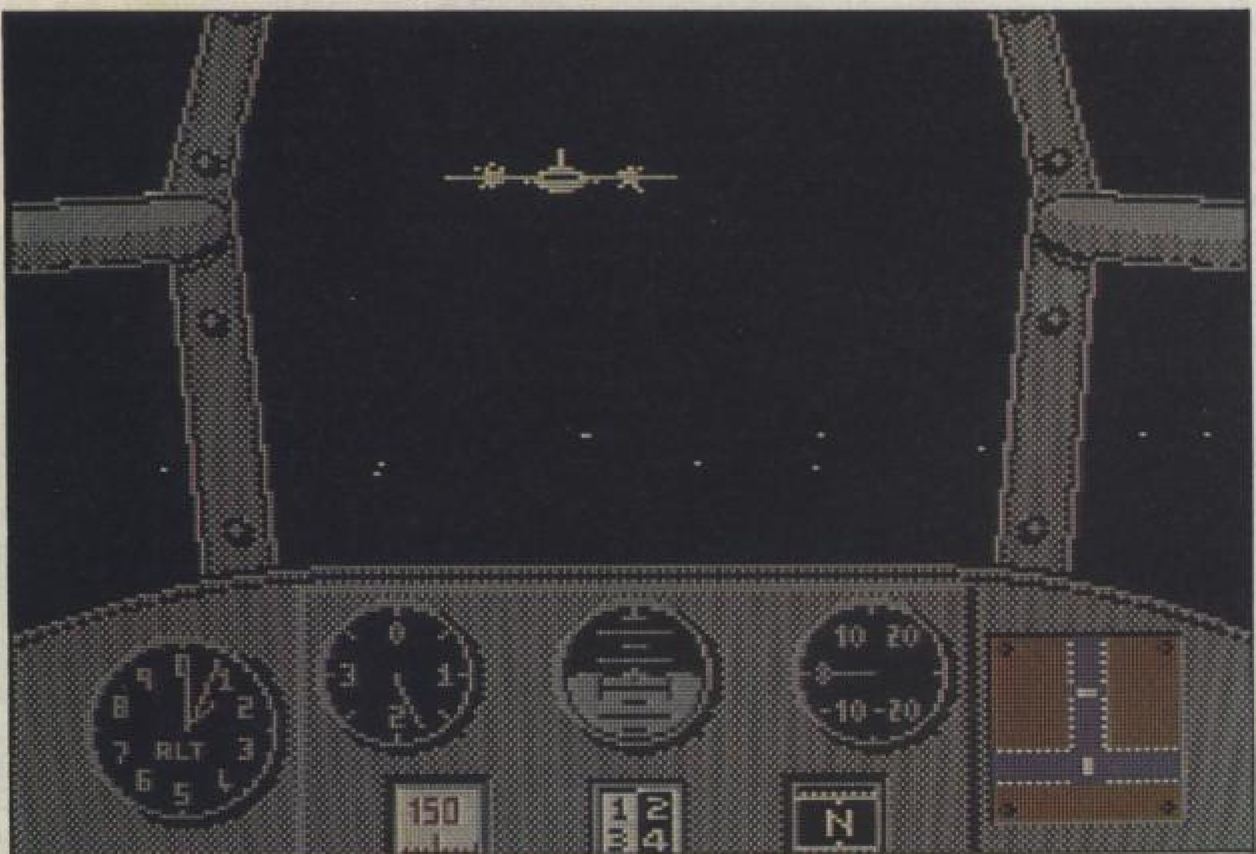
" The manual to Night Raider **is extremely detailed and even contains the history of the Bismarck and its sinking. Comprehensive flight training options allow the novice pilot to get used to the controls before attempting a real mission. The different screens for each member of the crew allow for great attention to detail and many more instruments than would have been possible on a single screen. Accurate vector graphics are fast, with enemy planes being reasonably detailed considering the speed. Five missions of varying difficulty should help to lengthen the appeal of the game and the hardest missions will give even the best pilots a run for their money. This is definitely not a mindless shoot-'em-up but a game that combines strategy and arcade skills to good effect. A well-presented, high quality simulation which will appeal to all fans of the genre. "**

85%

NICK

" Night Raider **is quite good as flight simulations go, but visually poor. The odd solid plane occasionally flies over, and the few boats that you come across are nothing more than tiny sprites. The missions vary from just shooting a few ships to a full-scale battle. A feature I liked allowed you to plot a course which the plane will follow, while you blow up everything in sight – thus saving you the hassle of keeping an eye on everything.** Night Raider **isn't the best flight simulation around, but still very interesting. "**

63%



▲ 'We're under attack, we're under attack!' Can you stand action of this pace?

MARK

" Night Raider **is certainly a complicated game. You have to watch all the different screens like a hawk, otherwise the unfortunate crew of you aeroplane end up taking an unexpected swim. Still – a quick perusal of the enclosed instruction manual should keep even the most inept pilot out of the waves. Graphically,** Night Raider **is impressive, and although the view out of the cockpit is drab (remember that it's night time), the detail on the various knobs and dials, especially on the engineer's console, is great. There's plenty of challenge, ranging from practising the basic manoeuvres such as landing and taking off, to a full blown attack on the Bismarck, stopping off to sink a few E- and U-boats on the way. I greatly enjoyed playing** Night Raider **– a leading simulation game and well worth a look. "**

83%

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Kempston, Cursor, Sinclair
Graphics: typically indistinguishable wire-frame shapes
Sound: grinding spot effects
Options: five different missions and a practice mode
General rating: a cool and competent flight simulation with plenty of attention to detail

Presentation	76%
Graphics	70%
Playability	72%
Addictive qualities	77%
OVERALL	**79%**

ALTERNATIVE WORLD GAMES

Producer: **Gremlin Graphics**
Retail price: **£7.99 cassette, £12.99 disk**

With the ultra-serious Olympic Games just around the corner, Gremlin have decided that a little fun is in order. *Alternative World Games* is a spoof on sport itself and includes eight comical events.

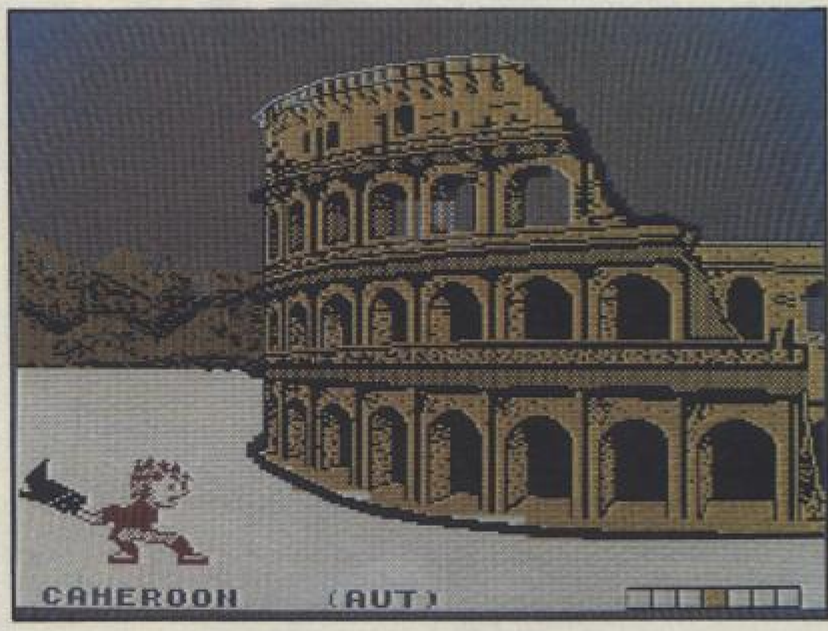
On loading, the screen shows a parrot next to an old gramophone. The player can choose to compete for any of eight countries; the parrot then puts on a record which plays a tune associated with that nation. Up to eight players can compete, with only two playing at the same time.

The game selection screen contains a video recorder with nine monitors. Eight screens represent the events while the ninth contains an option to compete or practise. Having been chosen, the event is loaded in from the tape.

Event number one is the Sack Race in which the player must move from left to right avoiding the manholes.

The second event involves balancing a pile of plates. The fewer plates dropped, the higher your final score.

Next comes the Boot Throwing contest. The player must swing a boot round and round, then throw it as far as possible. You can select an empty or a water-filled boot; the full boot can travel farther but tires the player out faster.

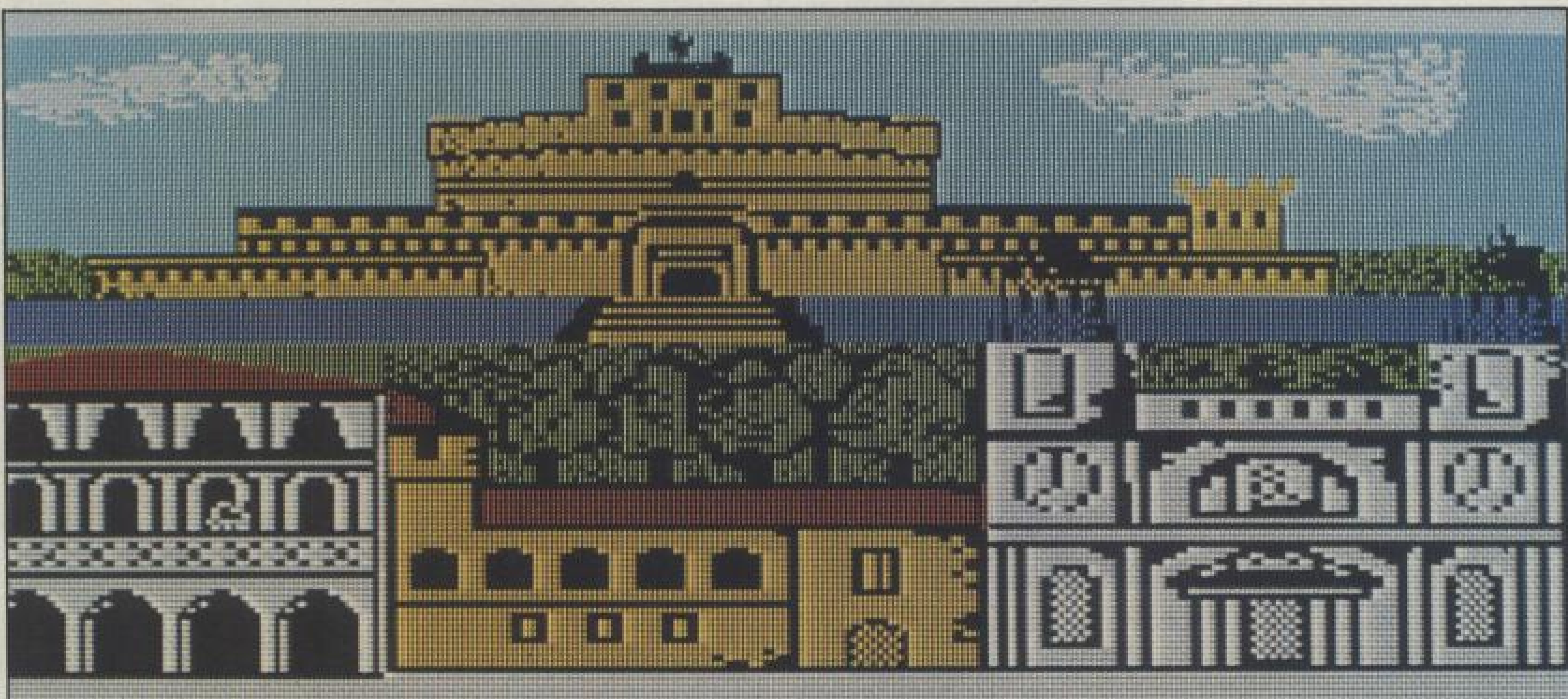


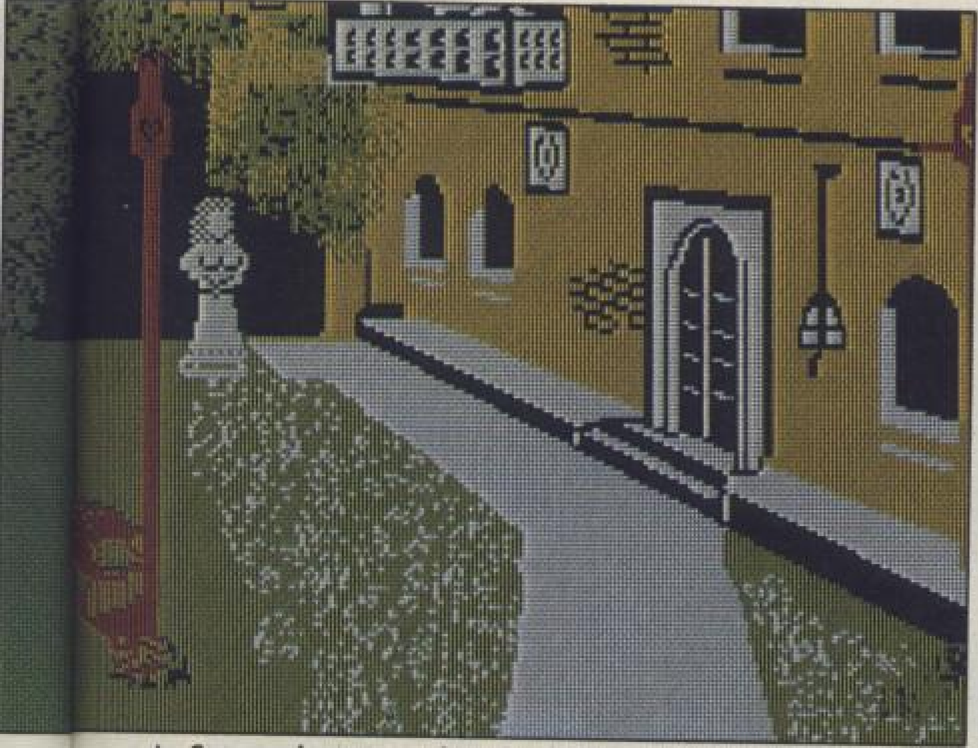
NICK

" Alternative World Games **seems to be just one big multiload! All you do is load in one event, play it and load in another (even on the 128K!). The game is excellently presented, though, with animated parrots, country selections and a whole host of different tunes which improve when you start to play.** Alternative World Games' **strongest point is its variety. Every event is like a new game and, with eight to choose from, you can't lose. A particular favourite of mine is the Pile of Plates – you have to wobble along the ground, balancing as many plates as you can carry. I love the way they all crash to the floor – to your utter horror!** Alternative World Games **may not be graphically perfect, but it's worth buying even if it's just for the tunes! "**

88%

▼ The incredible human bridge makes his first attempt





▲ Cameron's nervous about heights

PHIL

" It's good to see a light-hearted sports game for a change and Alternative World Games **contains some very offbeat events. The country selection screen shows a large, well-animated parrot; I love the way he picks up a record with his beak and puts it on the gramophone. The many tunes (different ones for each nation and event) really liven up the action. Each event is well presented with colourful backgrounds and smoothly animated characters. Unfortunately, some of the events are a little lacking in content – you sometimes spend more time waiting for an event to load, than actually playing it. However, with eight games in one, you get good value for money.** Alternative World Games **is a worthwhile package which should appeal to all but the most serious sports buffs. "**

84%

Grab your vaulting pole and it's on to the River Jump. You've hardly got time to catch your breath before you're trying to collect a bottle of champagne in the Pole Climbing contest.

Event six involves a Run Up The Wall carrying a hat, and is followed by a Pillow Fight in which you attempt to knock your opponent into the water.

In the final event, you must pogo around the course, within a given time limit, bursting balloons along the way.

MARK

" Following a string of serious sports games, mainly from the Epyx stable, it's nice to see Gremlin releasing a game with such silly events as Boot Throwing, Pole Climbing, Plate Balancing and Pogoing. The graphics are detailed, with large monochromatic sprites wobbling around the screen as they compete in some of the strangest sporting events you'll ever see. I spent a lot of time tearing my hair out because of the annoyingly long wait the player has to suffer between multiloaded events. However, most of the events are worth the effort – especially the plate balancing, which has the poor competitor teetering beneath a huge pile of crockery. Take a look – Alternative World Games **certainly makes a change from the usual run-of-the-mill examples of the genre. "**
82%

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: detailed backdrops, with slightly blocky and jerkily animated sprites
Sound: jolly loading tune and with a different tune for each country and event. Raspy in-game spot effects
Options: compete or practise the events in any order as the representative of any of eight countries
General rating: an enjoyably weird and whacky world tour, slightly marred by a very tedious multiload

Presentation	84%
Graphics	79%
Playability	83%
Addictive qualities	81%
OVERALL	**85%**

OVERKILL

Producer: **Atlantis**
Retail price: **£1.99**
Author: **Grant Jaquest**

In the remote galaxy of Quanton, all the dreaded moon citadels, each of which contains an arsenal of deadly weapons, are to be destroyed.

Unfortunately, the Galileo moon citadel has activated its automatic defence system. You must penetrate its defences and destroy the ten nuclear towers at its core. The citadel contains five levels, the alien inhabitants of each reduce your energy on contact.

You control the velocity of the main character and can manoeuvre him on to trampolines to make him jump. Other levels are accessed by colliding with the teleport bubble.

The nuclear towers are located on Level Five. Each consists of nine blocks which are destroyed by anti-radiation orbs collected from a dimension room. Collecting time cubes increases the amount of time you can spend in this room. Orbs are collected by moving across a three-by-three grid.

When time runs out in the dimension room, the player returns to Level One and must progress to Level Five, where the towers can be destroyed on touch, block by block.

▼ All alone in the Quanton galaxy



CRITICISM

● " The most unusual thing about *Overkill* is that the main character is unarmed – there's no killing at all! Gameplay is therefore limited to avoiding the nasties while collecting time cubes. Progress is initially very difficult as control is awkward when jumping and enemies are pretty hard to avoid. Backdrops are colourful but largely irrelevant and the main character isn't animated at all when he is floating through the air. Collecting orbs in the dimension room is extremely simple, as is the destruction of the towers. Once you've mastered the controls, the game becomes easy – I managed to complete it after about a dozen attempts. "
PHIL **54%**

● **"** Overkill **is the latest offering from Grant Jaquest, author of** Disposable Heroes **(reviewed back in Issue 52), and I must admit that there's more than a passing resemblance. The graphics are bright, but simplistic, with blobby-looking sprites wobbling around very samey looking backdrops. The lack of a weapon, even to stun the meanies, is an annoying omission, especially later on in the game when collision forfeits the precious orbs used to destroy the nuclear towers. A mildly addictive game, but not one of long term interest. "**
MARK **35%**

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: colourful but lacking in detail
Sound: burbly spot effects
General rating: not much to pay, not much to play

Presentation	47%
Graphics	44%
Playability	48%
Addictive qualities	39%
OVERALL	**39%**

HOPPING MAD

Producer: **Elite**
Retail price: **£7.99 cassette, £12.99 disk**
Authors: **Neil Latarche and Lizzie**

It's a hard life hopping through the world and *Hopping Mad* is full of ups and downs.

The player controls a string of four balls which continually bounce up and down as they move from right to left against a horizontally scrolling landscape. The player can make them jump higher (by pressing fire) and speed up or slow down their movement. The balls collect balloons by bouncing into them; a collection of ten balloons gives access to the next level.

Environments range from forest to beach scene (no time for sunbathing here) and from desert to undersea world. Each stage contains its own particular hazards, most of which burst one or more of the balls when hit. Desert cacti swallow up badly positioned balls; prickly hedgehogs and slithering snakes crawl across the earth, and lethal rooks and bees soar through the air. Extra points are awarded for collecting apples as well as other bonus objects and for jumping directly on to certain obstacles. When all four balls have burst, the player loses one of three lives.

Play skilfully enough and you can bounce through the world, over the sea and out into uncharted regions of space to boldly hop where no man (or woman) has hopped before.



▼ Watch out for the ball-eating plant

PHIL

" The controls for the game are extremely simple; just left, right and fire, but the balls are still incredibly difficult to control as they bounce through the scrolling landscape. The backgrounds lack detail but are very colourful with the odd spot of colour clash. The sprites move easily and quickly against a smoothly scrolling background. There are a couple of nice tunes on the 128K – it's just a pity that they don't play during the game itself. The idea of bouncing is reminiscent of the ancient Kosmic Kanga **but this time the screen scrolls from left to right. Personally, I'd have preferred it the other way round. Despite its simplicity, gameplay is fast and fun but also very challenging as you try to keep up to four balls out of trouble at the same time. The real problem with the game is its repetitiveness and the rather high difficulty. Still it's very playable and keeps you coming back for more; definitely worth a look. "**

84%

KATI

" Skipping through the countryside as a series of interconnected bouncing bobbles doesn't sound like the most promising game scenario, but what starts out sounding incredibly silly turns out to be extremely enjoyable. The colourful backdrops are bright and bouncy – as with all Elite games a jolly 128K tune helps you on your sprightly way – and collision detection is totally accurate as you bound recklessly over hedgehogs, lizards and flowers, squashing the innocents as you go. The only missing ingredient is a bit of variety. If only there was a contrasting sub-game, a bit of multidirectional hopping, a two-player option – anything for a little alternative excitement. When you've bounced and bounded your merry way through all eight levels of this computerised hopscotch you may feel a little disappointed that there's nothing more. Still – as long as you're not after the game of a lifetime you've got a few enjoyably acrobatic weeks on your hands. "

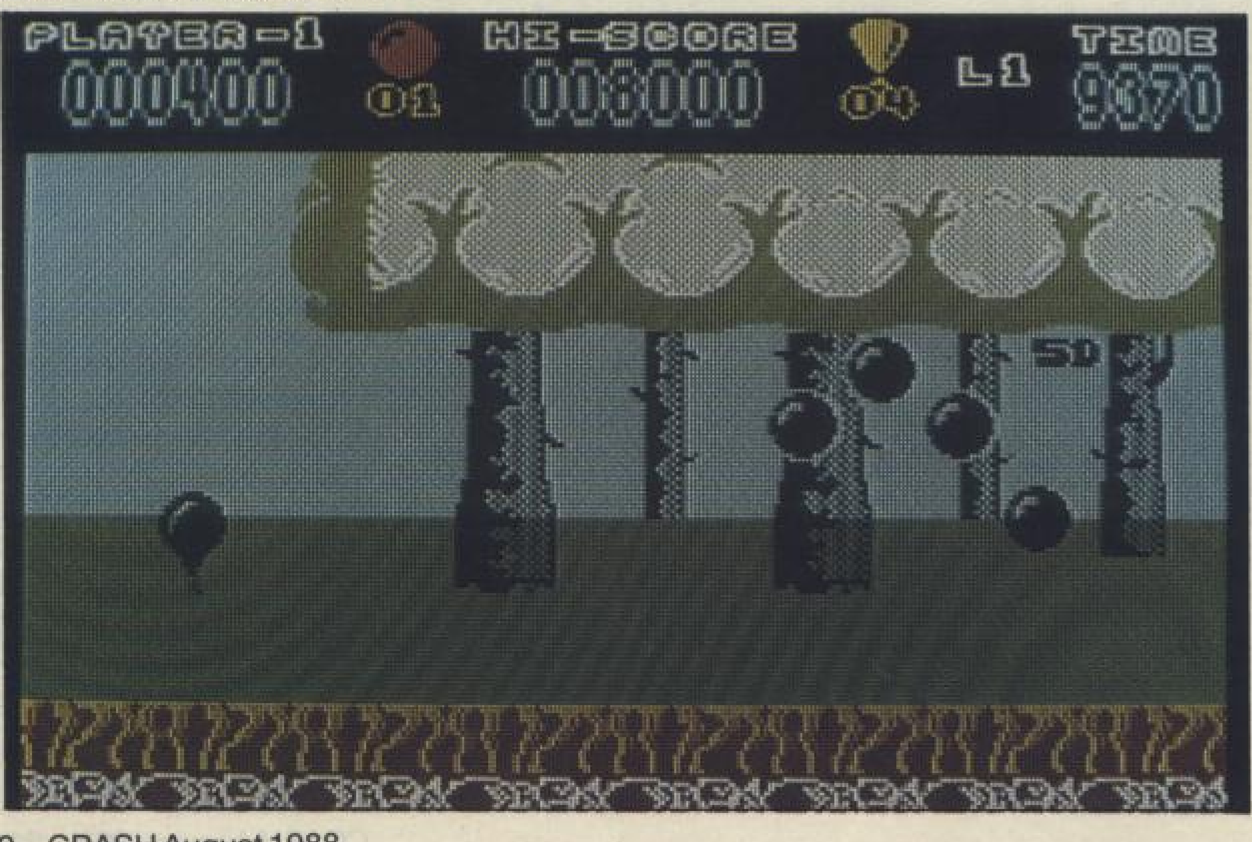
74%

NICK

" The control method of Hopping Mad **is very similar to that of Ocean's** Wizball **in that there's so much inertia it is extremely easy to go out of control. The presentation is excellent, with a tune that sounds like it has come from a children's programme, along with some colourful and jolly graphics. The game itself is terribly hard to play; with some concentration I did manage to get to the start of Level 3 but found it impossible to finish. It's a shame Elite have made it so difficult to get anywhere because the further you get the better the graphics and animation – Level 8 should be a real treat! At least they've chosen the right title for a game where, if you're not careful, you can get killed very easily in the first couple of seconds – and go** Hopping Mad! **"**

76%

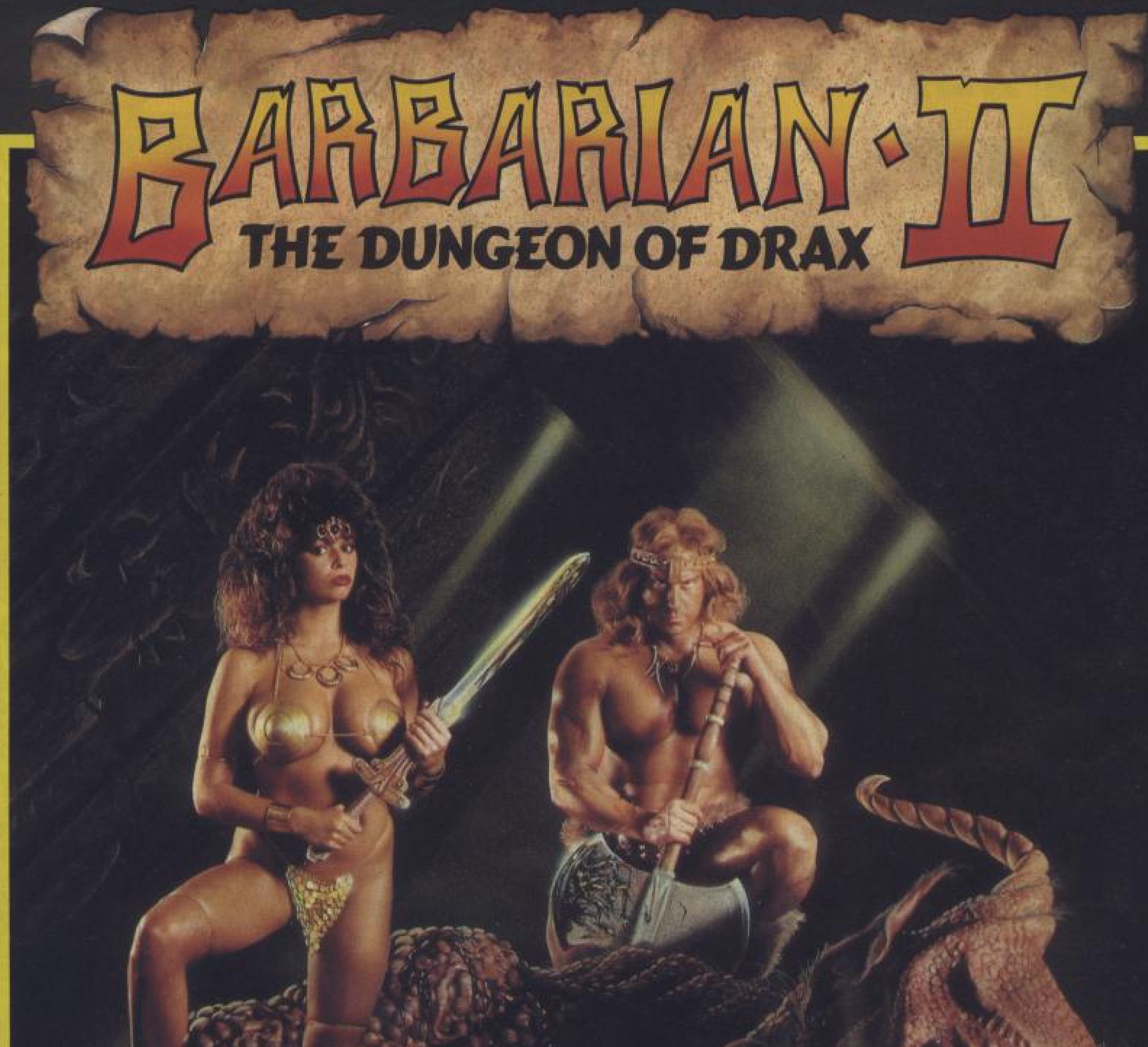
▼ Just hop, hop, hopping along



COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: bright, bouncy and colourful with well-animated figures
Sound: two jolly 128K title tunes plus many varied squirty spot effects
General rating: the unusual control method and the attractive presentation are great fun at first. However, repetitive and difficult gameplay suggest that initial enthusiasm may not last

Presentation	76%
Graphics	75%
Playability	80%
Addictive qualities	77%
OVERALL	**78%**



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Amiga Version



C64 Version



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SAMPLING IN THE HEAT

This month, JON 'N-N-N-NORMAN' BATES steps into the shadows of the Motel's parlour for a didactic review of Quasar's Yamaha DX7 programmer plus more on those wild 'n' whacky samplers . . .

SUMMER IS always oppressive. Here at the motel the heat tends to send me into the cool of the back room where I can practise my taxidermy and sift through a few letters. Although I sometimes forget to switch the vacancies sign on, I have never forgotten to power up my speccy. But enough of my moaning, mother will be wondering where I am, on with some sampling . . .

Over the years we have seen various bolt-on goodies that will sample sounds, but basically the principle is the same. The sound, in the form of analog electrical waves, is converted to digital information. This is then 'captured' by a routine that takes many very fast freeze-frame snapshots of the sound and stores them in the computer's memory – playback is a reversal of this process. Now although the concept is simple, the realisation and end results are wide and many. A professional sampler usually has a few selectable sample rates – that is the number of times it freezes the sound per second. This in turn has an effect on the length of sound that you can hold; the faster the sample rate the shorter the amount of sound but the higher the quality and definition.

Another variable factor in this equation is the number of bits that the sampler processor handles. In 1979 the most famous of all musical computers was launched, the Fairlight fantastic. For a more in-depth appraisal take a peek at Issue Two of THE GAMES MACHINE, where (blowing a very quiet trumpet) I ran through its history and facilities.



Suffice it to say that the first version used 8-bit sampling – which is of course the very same number of bits that the Spectrum uses, thus proving that it is not impossible to produce reasonable samples within the humble exterior of the Spectrum. However, what makes the sound acceptable is not necessarily the actual sampling routines but the processes which the sound is subject to before and after.

Firstly, a decent level of sound is required. Just as on a cassette deck, if you record at too low a level you get a high level of background hiss which neatly swamps the sound with a noise not unlike the shower running in cabin number one (you remember that one don't you?). Hence a good sound level is of prime importance. The Fairlight had some very fancy maths that actually compressed the sound at the same time as expanding it to fit the available memory space. This, coupled with some very quiet filters, helped to make the sampled sound as clean as a whistle. However the important part of the business is quantization.

Think of a succession of snapshots following one another to make a moving picture, as in an amateur film. (Remember films? They came before videos!) With 8 mm and even 16 mm film you get some degree of jerkiness. Quantization is the maths that tries to take the edge from the snapshots of sound and smooth the transition from one level of sound to another – obviously it will have to work pretty fast. As the most awkward resolution is going to be 8-bit sampling then unfortunately it is here that you need the best quantization. With any sampling it is the higher frequencies that suffer as these require a faster snapshot. Instruments that contain many upper harmonics, such as cymbals, will tend to have the tail end of their sound jagged and lumpy in texture (bit like the swamp!) with a slower sampling rate and not such fine quantization. Nowadays, in a professional sampler, 12-bit sampling is the minimum with 16-bit fast becoming the accepted standard. One wonders if 32-bit will not take over quite soon.

In this column I have considered several samplers for the Spectrum. You will no doubt have noticed that I also place in high esteem any program that has good editing facilities. They are the abilities to graphically display the sound in fine detail and enable you to select starting and stopping points. You should also be able to throw away what you don't need, thus freeing valuable memory space for future samples; loop parts or all of the sample for the 'N-N-N-Norman, where are y-y-you?' effect and be able to be save your sound to a library.

For the Spectrum you have only two choices – the Ram/Flare *Music Machine* and the Cheetah *Sampler*. Both are of equal (though not professional) audio quality, but can be improved by cleaning up the sound before and after sampling it. Basically this means begging and borrowing such pieces of gear as equalisers, compressors and noise gates. Remember, that rubbish fed in will certainly mean rubbish put out (with all the warts enhanced!). I'd plump for the *Music Machine*, not only for its MIDI compatibility but also the extra programs that can filter and enhance sampled sound – all available from their user club.

SIMPLE SAMPLE

Not all of us have the wherewithal to purchase the hi-tech hard and software for professional sampling. So, especially for you, **Jason Porter** checked out of the motel and left behind the following program.

Jason's program would benefit from a clean signal. In fact it would probably sound better taken from a CD player (if you can wire one up) as data recorders are not exactly ▶

```
2   REM BY Jason Porter
5   CLEAR 25999
6   LET T=0
10  FOR A=65408 TO 65535
20  READ S
30  POKE A, S
35  LET T=T+S
40  NEXT A
50  IF T<>12027 THEN PRINT "Data error": STOP
100 DATA 243, 33, 144, 101, 17, 80, 255, 6, 7, 219, 254, 203,
    119, 32, 2, 203, 254, 203, 62, 16, 244, 35, 125, 187, 32,
    237, 124, 186, 32, 233, 251, 201, 243, 33, 144, 101, 17,
    80, 255
110 DATA 6, 8, 203, 70, 40, 4, 62, 0, 211, 254, 62, 255, 211,
    254, 203, 14, 16, 240, 35, 125, 187, 32, 233, 124, 186, 32,
    229, 251, 201, 74, 70, 66, 0, 0, 60, 66, 66, 66, 66, 0, 0, 124,
    66, 66, 124, 64, 64, 0, 0, 60, 66, 66, 82, 74, 60, 0, 0, 124,
    66, 66, 124, 68, 66, 0, 0, 60, 64, 60, 66, 2, 66, 60, 0, 0, 254,
    16, 16, 16, 16, 16, 0, 0, 66, 66, 66, 66, 66, 60, 0
120 CLS: PRINT "1 SAMPLE A SOUND" ' "2 REPLAY
    SAMPLED SOUND"
130 INPUT K
140 IF K=1 THEN CLS: PRINT "Place the cassette with
    the sound on it in the tape recorder and press PLAY"
    ''' "PRESS ANY KEY TO SAMPLE"
145 IF K=2 THEN RANDOMIZE USR 65440: GOTO 120
150 LET J$=INKEY$
160 IF J$<>"" THEN BEEP .5,10: RANDOMIZE USR
    65408: CLS: GOTO 120
170 GOTO 150
190 FOR A=0 TO 60: BEEP .01,A: NEXT A
```

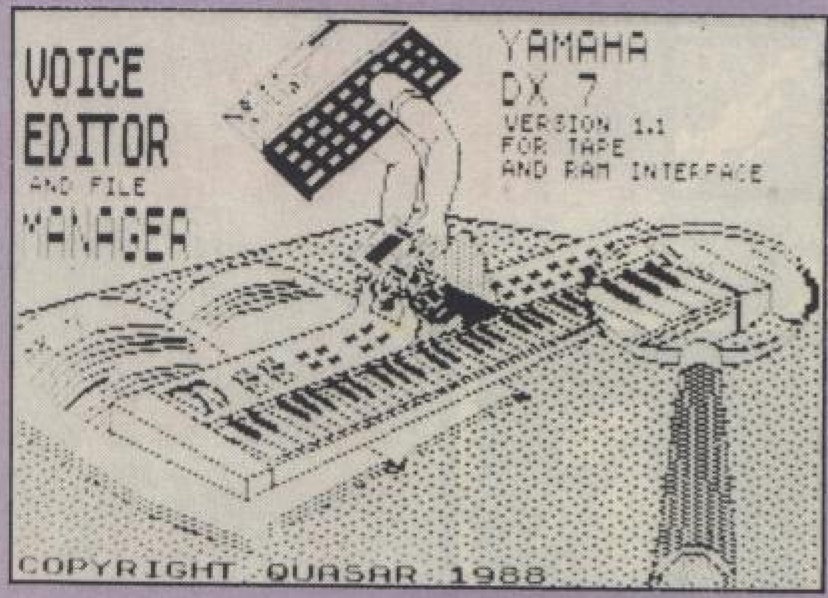
noted for high-fidelity. All the instructions are onscreen and it will give you about eight seconds of sample. For some reason which I couldn't understand, the replay sometimes dropped in pitch, but I guess it could be my equipment. But it's a very simple and fun program, with scope for development.

NO HASSLE

Quasar Software have been busy again and have dished up another program for the omnipresent Yamaha DX7. It takes the hassle out of programming a digital synthesizer from the front panel and a 17 character LCD. It follows along the design of their *DX21/27/100 Voice Editor* which was delivered to the motel for Issue 53. Quasar's software currently only runs on the *Music Machine* but there are plans to release it for other interfaces soon.

The main screen display shows the six operators and the shape of the envelope for each one. SPACE bar jumps the editing marker around the screen. Once in the main editing area the left and right cursors take over to define the peripheral you're working on. Maybe it would have been nice to have a display of exactly which peripheral of the envelope you are working on, as quite often you want to copy voices in from printed out 'patches' (as the sound charts are called by the cognoscenti). The graphic display reacts quickly to any changes and the definition of the small graphs is good. Bar graphs are used to show the output of each operator as well as the low frequency oscillator, keyboard scaling facilities and velocity sensitivity (that's the bit for the touch sensitivity). A display of the algorithm shape and transposition is also on the one screen and you can compare any alterations with the original.

Other functions of the program are what is termed as library management. This is the creation



of banks of voices to load into your DX7 so that you can assemble suitable sounds for different uses and change voices from bank to bank. The program comes with 120 or so voices, all Japanese I'm assured. If you load up the whole lot in one greedy go you can re-order any of the banks and send or recall any bank (or individual voice) to the library or the synth. Pretty smart stuff – just like the real thing, ha-ha. In fact only a couple of features separate the Quasar voice program from more expensive ones (like £150 ones!) for other micros. Only a few niggling omissions – like that lack of voice list printer dump – prevent this from being a very competitive package. But at only £9.99 it should prove a worthy purchase.

Oh dear . . . I think the water level in the swamp at the back of the cabins is going down and Mr Arboghast's car roof is very nearly visible. Mother will be angry if she can see the car from her window.

Next month the motel invites a party of TX81Z editors, attempts to trap a few readers' letters, and generally gets dual personalities about everything! There's a lack of tunes for the 128K machines in the mailbag so how about dropping Jon a tune or two? Don't forget it's peak season for the Bates Motel so don't expect any personal replies from Jon.







SIMON N GOODWIN gets things together quicker with two new assemblers

CODE MASTERS

Nearly all Spectrum games and utilities are written in machine code – the simple internal language recognised by the Spectrum's Z80A processor. Machine code is a very simple programming language, but it's executed most rapidly – at roughly half a million instructions a second. It's this speed that makes machine-code programming attractive to people who want to get the best possible performance out of the computer.

The snag is that each instruction is very simple in effect, and large so intricate combinations of instructions must be used if you want something relatively complicated to happen. The machine code routines built into the Spectrum ROM illustrate this.

The ROM software, used by BASIC and many games, executes about 150 instructions to print a single character on the display. When you draw a line across the screen the ROM executes about 60 instructions for every single point drawn on the line.

Machine code may execute very quickly, but writing and testing it is a slow and laborious business. Mistakes are often fatal – you don't get helpful error reports, as in ZX BASIC, unless you anticipate every possible mistake. If you use the wrong instruction in a machine-code program you may wipe out all your work in a fraction of a second. Machine code is fickle stuff, and you have to write quite a lot of it before you begin to build up a reliable framework.

Luckily, since we're using a computer, we can get the machine to help us write and test machine code. There are two approaches to this. We can use an assembler, which lets us write individual machine-code instructions in a way that makes them easy to identify, test and alter, and assembles each line into machine code. Alternatively we can use a compiler.

A compiler takes a program written in a form that's fairly concise and easy for humans to understand, and converts it into machine-code instructions automatically. If the compiler comes across anything it can't understand it tries to explain the problem so you can make things clear.

One line of compiled code may be translated into tens or hundreds of machine-code instructions, whereas one assembler line usually corresponds to a single instruction.

Compilers work well, but they restrict what you can do. No compiler knows how to write everything that a practised machine code programmer could come up with. They tend to use inefficient general-purpose routines to do something in the best possible way.

Compilers can produce fast code – if you can live without decimal numbers, compiled programs can be 100-200 times faster than BASIC – but they hardly ever produce code as fast and concise as a good machine code programmer, particularly if you're writing nitty-gritty routines, such as animating the display or packing a game map into a small amount of memory.

The speed and space penalties of compiled code mean that the most successful and impressive Spectrum programs are usually painstakingly written in machine code, using an assembler rather than a compiler. Unfortunately changes in the Spectrum market mean that most of the once-popular assembler programs are no longer available.

Back in the Issue 50 Tech Tips Special I bemoaned the shortage of Spectrum assemblers. In the last few years I've reviewed good packages like *Code Machine* and *Laser Genius*, only to find that the games firms that published them were unwilling to keep them in stock for more than a few months.

For a while HiSoft's six-year-old *DevPac* was the only assembler advertised to Spectrum users. *DevPac* works fine, but it's not particularly cheap or easy to learn to use.

I'm happy to report that my plea for new assemblers has got results! I've just reviewed two programs – *Z80 Toolkit*, from Lerm Software, and *Astrum+*, from Bradway Software. I've been using them for a while, and comparing them with HiSoft's venerable *DevPac*.

ASSEMBLER PARTS

Complete assembler-programming systems come in three main parts. The names for the parts vary, depending on the manufacturer, but in principle every system contains an editor, which lets you type in machine-code instructions in the form of simple, standard mnemonics.

The assembler itself translates the mnemonics into binary code, the debugger helps you to test assembled code and track down errors. Most packages also include a disassembler, which converts machine code in memory into mnemonics you can edit and reassemble later.

The assembler generates a symbol table, which relates names in your text, known as labels, to particular values and memory addresses. It's very helpful to be able to refer to values by name, even though most assemblers limit the maximum length of names so that the symbol table doesn't get too large.

Z80 TOOLKIT

Lerm's *Z80 Toolkit* is much the cheapest package, yet it's fairly comprehensive. It runs on all Spectrums, including the +3, and is compatible with almost all add-ons.

£7.99 gets you a 23-page A5 manual and a cassette containing three main files. Side 1 is the complete package – assembler, editor and debugger – and takes about two minutes to load.

The other side contains two copies of the debugger, called the toolkit – one loads at high memory addresses and the other loads at the bottom of memory. It's up to you to choose the version that will not get in the way of your own code. The debugger is a little over 8K long, and loads in about a minute.

The manual is a good tutorial in the use of the entire package, though it's short of some reference material – for instance, there's no explanation of how you add documentary comments to a program. In fact, comments are entered in the standard way – just start your line with a semicolon and the assembler will ignore the rest, assuming it's for human eyes only.

The *Z80 Toolkit* editor uses the normal Spectrum 32-character line display, which means comments really have to be on lines of their own. The editor lets you edit and re-enter lines on the screen, using the cursor keys to move around. Special keypresses let you insert spaces into a line, delete characters and jump between columns to keep your listing tidy.

You can enter lines more than 32 characters long, but the insert-character key doesn't let you extend a line down the screen, so it's best to keep lines short and put up with rather narrow printouts.

As in BASIC, lines are kept in order, so you must start them with a line number between 1 and 65,500. You can get the system to generate numbers automatically, or renumber whole files to give even steps between line numbers.

The undocumented limit of 65,500 is generous, as the maximum size of your program text is limited to about 20K, which usually corresponds to 2K or 3K of machine code.

If you want to write bigger programs you must write them in sections and copy addresses from one program to another so that each part can find the others. This is a fiddle, but lots of successful programmers work that way.

You can move lines around the file with *Z80 Toolkit*, but you have to move them one by one by editing their numbers – a rather tedious process.

Z80 Toolkit will load files created with the *Zeus* assembler distributed by Sinclair a few years ago, though you may need to make a few minor changes before the file will assemble.

Z80 Toolkit is compatible with just about every filing device – cassettes, Opus, +D, +3, Swift Disc, Disciple, Microdrive and everything else that leaves most of the memory free and lets you save code from BASIC.

This compatibility has its cost: there are no commands to save and load built into *Z80 Toolkit*, but you can find out the address and length of any file, before or after it is assembled.

Z80 Toolkit makes saving and loading long-winded but easy, if you make a note of the relevant numbers. You are expected to hop back to BASIC and use the normal programming commands for your system to save and load code. You must make a note, because the screen is cleared as you return to BASIC.

To re-enter the toolkit you just type RUN or a USR call. When you restart the program text appears to have vanished! But it reappears when you use the O command.

As long as you can fit everything, including the symbol table, into 23K you can have several files in memory at once, and swap between them at will by specifying a new start address for text.

Z80 Toolkit uses single-letter commands, but it's not particularly consistent. The assembler lets you edit text and translate it into machine code. A special command gets you to a set of add-on utilities, confusingly called the monitor, which let you change the screen colour, search for labels in the symbol table, or move the ▶

symbol table into screen memory to leave the maximum possible space for your program text.

Another command gets you into the toolkit, which others would call the monitor or debugger. Yet another command then calls up the disassembler. This gets a bit confusing, as command letters have different purposes in each of these four modes, and it's not always clear which mode you're in.

ASTRUM+

Astrum+ has many more features than *Z80 Toolkit*, but it's almost twice the price – £14. The manual is 36 A5 pages long, and has no examples, though it's a good reference guide.

The cassette contains around 20 files, spread over both sides, totalling 80K of code. The tape files transfer automatically to microdrive or disk, as long as you press the PAUSE button while files are saved. I found this rather tricky because I started on Side 1 of the tape, and missed the instructions – for some reason Bradway Software assume people will load Side 2 first!

Besides the editor and assembler, Bradway supply utility programs to read other assembler text tapes, copy files from one drive to another, print file details, and configure the system for particular drives and printers.

The debugger and disassembler come in three versions, to load at address 36000, 46000 and 56000. The manual refers to a file of Spectrum system labels, covering the ROM and system variables, but I couldn't find it.

Astrum+ may appeal as an upgrade for many programmers, as it comes with a utility to convert files from HiSoft, Oasis, OCP and Picturesque format to suit itself.

Astrum+ works on all Spectrum versions except the +3. It will assemble from disk to disk (or microdrive), so you can write very large programs, but first you must divide your text into 10K sections, called pages. Single pages can be assembled from memory to memory, but there's only about 2K spare for your code, at address 56000.

The *Astrum+* editor is happy with lines up to 256 characters long, panning the screen sideways to show lines of more than 32 characters. Lines are automatically formatted into neat columns as you enter them.

Astrum+ has a true screen editor, without line numbers, so you can't intersperse system commands as you enter lines. You must use a set of trendy pull-down menus to control *Astrum+*'s most powerful features. I found these menus rather clumsy to use, and would prefer an old-fashioned command line.

There are too many menus, and each one is too small. You have to press SYMBOL SHIFT and Q, to select the required bank of menus, then SYMBOL SHIFT and E to select one from each bank of three. SYMBOL SHIFT W pulls down the chosen menu, then you press any key to cycle through the options, pressing ENTER to select one in particular.

You can create, save, load and merge files, display a list of filenames (without any other details) on a chosen drive – but the drive-changing and merging options are not on the main files menu. You can print, move, copy or delete marked blocks of lines, find or replace any characters, swap between file pages or assemble the program.

Astrum+ asks you to check that you've loaded the correct disk or cartridge, and then press a key, before it uses the drives. You can turn this function off when assembling from a single drive.

The software supports up to eight microdrives, but all the pages of a particular program must be on one drive, so you may have to swap tapes manually even if you've got enough drives to plug all the cartridges in at once.

Users of the Opus Discovery version should be able to avoid this, even if their files total more than 180K of code, as Bradway sell an add-on 720K second drive for that interface. A complete kit, consisting of the drive, cable, RAM expansion, software and manual, costs just £85, making this upgrade attractive to all Discovery users, whether or not they're interested in *Astrum+*.

I tested the microdrive version of *Astrum+*, using Version 1.2 of Sixword's Swift Disk microdrive emulator. This worked well but I found that I had to return to BASIC to erase files before I could replace

Machine code is executed at 500,000 instructions a second

them with others that had the same name. Apart from that minor quirk, the emulation was perfect, and a fair bit faster than my ZX Microdrive ever went! Microdrive files are automatically verified after saving – a sensible precaution.

Astrum+ will save and load cassette files, but it's really intended for Opus disk or microdrive users – the tape options are just to allow you to take cheap backup copies of your work.

Astrum+ issues clear error messages in plain English, and shows unused labels in a special colour in the symbol table – a nice touch that should help you detect errors and keep your text tidy.

The *Astrum+* debugger is controlled with four or five letter commands, rather than single keys. This makes it easy to remember the commands, but slows you down. It will work in decimal or hexadecimal, whichever you choose.

The front-panel display packs all the register values into eight lines and won't show the value of each half of the 16-bit register-pairs. This doesn't matter if you're using the hex display, but it makes the decimal display rather useless if you're using 8-bit values.

You can change register values more easily than you can display them, but you still have to move a pointer to indicate the registers you want to change, then type a command to set the new value – you can't just type the name and the new value, as you can with *Z80 Toolkit*.

By contrast, *Z80 Toolkit* shows 16-bit and 8-bit register values separately, plus individual register contents in binary. It still steps at about the same speed – a maximum of roughly five instructions a second, updating the whole screen at each step.

INVIDIOUS COMPARISONS

Both these packages have advantages and disadvantages compared with HiSoft's old stalwart, *DevPac*. Whereas *DevPac* insists on capital letters, the others let you mix upper-case and lower-case in your programs. *Astrum+* has better error reports than the others – it uses text, rather than numbers, to tell you what's gone wrong. The snag is that things like this limit the amount of text you can edit at any one time.

The program editors vary a lot – HiSoft's is capable but very old-fashioned, a line editor rather than a screen editor. *Astrum+* has the most modern user interface, with its pull-down menus, but I found them tiresome to use. The *Z80 Toolkit* editor is simple and straightforward, but rather limited if you want to make large-scale changes.

Astrum+ allows labels to be up to eight characters long, while the others limit you to six characters. I think both limits are rather restrictive, though I welcome the extra couple of characters *Astrum+* can handle.

Astrum+ is relatively slow, because it is written as a large collection of separate programs. For instance, you have to reload the debugger every time you use the assembler, because the label information overwrites the memory locations used by the debugger. This is not too painful if you've got a 128K Spectrum, as you can keep the debugger on RAM disk.

DevPac has some unique advantages, but they are rather poorly implemented unless you splash out £50 for the CP/M version which HiSoft use to write their own software. *DevPac* lets you define macros – like shorthand instructions, one macro name can stand for a whole block of code defined elsewhere in the text. *Z80 Toolkit* has none, and *Astrum+* only has a few predefined ones to call ROM routines.

DevPac also allows conditional code – sections that are assembled only if certain conditions are satisfied. The snag is that on standard Spectrum versions of *DevPac* these structures cannot be nested. You need the £50 CP/M version before you can do really useful things like put conditions inside conditions or use macros in other macro definitions. The CP/M version also comes with *ED80* – a proper screen editor capable of editing files over 50K long.

Z80 Toolkit is the fastest assembler if you're processing short files, but it gets very fiddly assembling programs of more than about 20K text, as it's up to you to join up the sections.

Z80 Toolkit allows numbers to be entered or displayed in hexadecimal – base 16 – or normal decimal; *DevPac* and *Astrum+* recognise octal – base 8 and binary as well.

Unlike the others, *Z80 Toolkit* doesn't allow complex calculations in your text. *Astrum+* and *DevPac* let you write calculations involving labels and 16-bit numbers, whereas it seems *Z80 Toolkit* will only let you add or subtract a single number from a label.

The *Z80 Toolkit* manual is vague on this, as on other things – it's a good tutorial, but less of a reference manual than the documentation for the other assemblers. Be warned: none of these packages will teach you Z80 programming. You'll need a separate book if you're new to machine code.

All the debugging programs let you examine registers and step through code, instruction by instruction, tracing register values and following the program flow. *Z80 Toolkit* has much the clearest and most helpful display, and is relatively easy to use. In particular it shows the values of the stack very clearly, with a ten-line column dynamically showing values as they are pushed onto the stack and popped off it.

The main flaw is that *Z80 Toolkit* won't let you enter breakpoints – instructions which interrupt code at a specified point, returning you to the monitor. The software requires you to step right through each subroutine as you test it; you can't make it zoom through to a certain point, and step slowly thereafter.

Z80 Toolkit has one unique and friendly feature. It can trap all instructions that modify memory contents, stepping quickly through the rest of the code but waiting for a keypress – Y or N – to tell it whether or not to operate each store instruction.

The *Astrum+* debugging program does everything you'd expect, but it uses a cramped display and commands have to be typed in full.

DevPac and *Astrum+* can disassemble code in memory back into mnemonics and labels, so you can edit and reassemble other people's code. This is tricky with *Z80 Toolkit*, because it only disassembles mnemonics – it doesn't work out the labels for you.

Astrum+ can skip data areas automatically. Just tell it where you've put text or tables of values, and it will avoid trying to turn the

contents of that part of memory into nonsensical assembly code. The other disassemblers just pretend the values are code.

Z80 Toolkit disassembles the secret Z80 instructions I mentioned in Issue 52 – but, like the others, it doesn't let you type these instructions into your assembler program. You must enter them as numeric values.

We can get the computer to help us write code

DevPac is the only assembler that takes advantage of the extra RAM on a Spectrum 128 – almost all the debugging code is stored in the RAM disk, so users of the 128 machines can test up to 8K more code at a time if they use *DevPac*, rather than one of the other debuggers.

ASSEMBLED RANKS

If you've always wanted to try writing some machine code, but never got around to it, Lerm's *Z80 Toolkit* is a good buy. It's cheap, easy to use, and it works, though it's not ideal if you want to write programs thousands of lines long (and remember, it takes quite a few lines of assembler to do anything at all!).

Astrum+ has advantages and disadvantages compared with *DevPac*. It has a better editor and comes with lots of useful utility programs. Astrum+ also reports errors in English, so you don't have to memorize the meanings of a set of error codes.

DevPac takes up less RAM and drive space, and is more flexible about assembling to and from a drive. It lets you define your own macros and switch lumps of code in and out conditionally. *DevPac* works with a 51-column screen display, and the debugger fits inside the Spectrum 128's RAM disk.

Personally, I found *Z80 Toolkit* the easiest program to use, perhaps because it's designed for smaller projects. Lerm's debugger has its limitations, but boasts the best front-panel display. If you're working on a blockbuster program either *Astrum+* or *DevPac* should suit you, though in both cases it may take you a while to find your way around the system.

CALLING KEIRAN

Tipster Keiran Wood **recently sent in a copy of** The Spectrum Programmer, **his homemade Spectrum cassette magazine. Unfortunately neither his address nor the price of the tape reached me. If you're reading this, Keiran, please write again!**

PRICES AND SUPPLIERS

Z80 Toolkit £7.99 from LERM, *11 Beaconsfield Close, Whitley Bay, Tyne & Wear NE25 9UW* ☎ (091) 253 3615

Astrum+ £14 (Opus, Microdrive) from Bradway Software, *Hillsett, Upper Padley, Grindleford, Derbyshire S30 1JA*

DevPac £15.95 (tape), £19.95 (Opus, Disciple, +3), £49.95 (+3 CP/M – enhanced) from HiSoft, *The Old School, Greenfield, Bedford MK45 5DE* ☎ (0525) 718181

SUMMER SHOWERS

THIS is the busiest summer for Spectrum software I've ever known – at the moment CRASH has a dozen major programming and utility packages waiting to be reviewed, yet summer is supposed to be the quietest time of the year! The Spectrum market is thriving, and CRASH is at the centre of that activity.

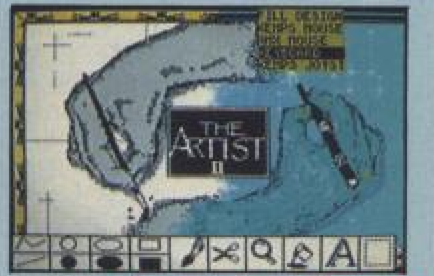
I'm still getting stacks of letters from readers, packed with the usual intermittently legible mixture of optimism, brilliance, threats, modesty, arrogance and sheer enthusiasm. It's your letters that keep me scribbling away in this part-time column, even though I don't often get time to reply to them.

I sometimes think that CRASH readers are the last group of micro enthusiasts who know the difference between having a computer and having a car or a big record collection. CRASH readers are hobbyists, not sheep, and that's why I enjoy writing for you.

If you've found out something interesting, or want to add to any of the discussions that have been featured in past issues, please write and let us know at: **CRASH, *PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.***

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- This is the product that the lego publication "Make and program you own robots" was based upon.
- Comes complete with cables.
- Easy to use.

ONLY £29.99



EXTENSION CABLE

- Distance peripherals from your computer.
- 56 way.
- 6" extension.
- Top quality connections.

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- Allows two peripherals to be connected together (memory conflicts allowing).
- 8" long.
- 56 way.
- Top quality connections.

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- Allows standard 9 pin joysticks (Quickshot II/Turbo etc.) to be used on +2/+3 computers.
- Supports rapid fire models.

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- Now you can connect your +3 to a cassette recorder.
- 2 ft. long.

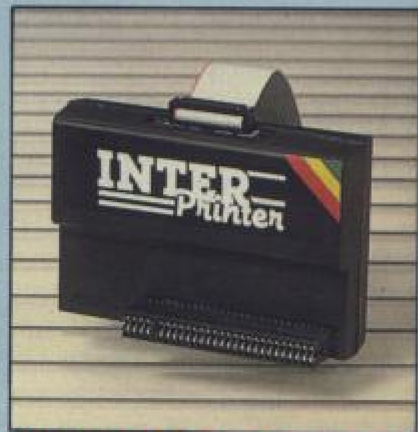
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- Complete with interface — plugs straight into Spectrum (all models).
- All the features of the best selling Quickshot II plus:
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- Extra rigged construction.
- Superb styling.

ONLY £17.99 COMPLETE



GAMES ACE

- Joystick interface & sound booster.
- Accepts any 9 pin joystick for maximum compatibility (Kempston system).
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Complete with Quickshot II

£17.99

or complete with Quickshot Turbo

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- Loading problems? This could be due to tape heads needing maintenance.
- This unique kit contains an electronic head demagnetiser and head cleaner.
- When heads need demagnetising they lose high frequency response which is vital for data transfer. This easy to use unit will demagnetise your tape head in seconds.
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- Useful for all tape decks around the home/car.

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- Now you can backup your games to microdrive or tape.
- Simply press the button to "freeze" the program.
- Save to microdrive or tape.
- Special compacting techniques.
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- 2 Joystick ports — one Kempston type — one Cursor type.
- Accepts any 9 pin joystick including rapid fire types.
- Can also be used with two joysticks with games that allow simultaneous two player control.

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- The world's top selling joystick.
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ROBOTARM — Full Function with 5 Axis movement

- Explore the fascinating science of Robotics with this fantastic full feature Robot Arm.
- Human like dexterity — with 5 axis of movement it is so versatile it can manipulate and pick up any object as small as a paper cup or as big as a tennis ball.
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- Comes with complete range of accessories including: Standard Grip Jaws to mimic finger type grip; Magnetic Finger Adaptor with release mechanism; Shovel Attachment for materials handling; 4 Stabilising Legs for heavier lifting jobs.
- Uses 4 HP2 batteries (not supplied) to power motor movement.
- Self contained ready to use (except batts/joysticks).

ONLY £49.99

INTERFACE OFFER

- Unique Interface/Software package to allow you to Interface and control the Robotarm with your Spectrum.
- Train mode allows you to store and then repeat arm movement sequences.
- Computer and Robotic control is a major subject in schools and colleges — this is a unique introduction.
- Very easy to use.
- This Interface is not needed to be able to use Robotarm but it makes possible interfacing the the Robotarm/Computer.

ONLY £19.99



CENSOR NONSENSE?

SPLIT SCREEN

Are games unfair to the fairer sex? IAN PHILLIPSON and KATI HAMZA give opposing views on the sexism-and-censorship debate

Compared with the great rain clouds that drift through our lives, sexist computer games don't even rank as a drizzle – Ian Phillipson

Censorship is an ugly word. It means controlling, or preventing, what others say, do and see. In some instances censorship is necessary – in most it is not.

The word once conjured up images of people fighting for fundamental rights that affected their way of life and that of future generations. But in recent years the word has become trivialised, and it's used every day to describe almost any kind of control.

Boots's decision that their shops would not sell Martech's *Vixen* unless the inlay artwork were changed has brought into sharp relief the whole question of censorship and the computer game. And the issue here isn't just censorship – it's sexism.

'Sexism is judging people by their gender, where it is irrelevant.' Probably very few people would stand up and justify sexism, but is it an area to which censorship should be applied quite so readily?

The percentage of 'sexist' mainstream games released in a year is small. Indeed, compared with the great rain clouds that drift through our lives, the problem of sexist computer games doesn't even rank as a drizzle. The fact is most people don't give a damn whether computer games are sexist or not and would regard videos and TV as far more important factors in creating and reinforcing sexist attitudes.

But if the procensorship lobby must make a fuss and have their pound of flesh, by insisting that censorship in some form or another is imposed upon the industry, how are they going to make it work?

The strongest response is a typical kneejerk reaction – if you don't like something, pass a law that prevents it. In an undiluted form this would state that you just cannot be sexist.

But laws are only effective if people think they are good laws, worth obeying, and if there are prison sentences and fines to reinforce them. So sweeping censorship of that kind would soon bring the law into disrepute.

Inevitably, most prosecution cases would look silly (the latest antics of borough councils who discipline employees for using words such as 'luv', 'dear' and 'gorgeous' are proof of this).

And many games producers would unwittingly fall foul of someone else's interpretation of sexism – so often that they'd never be out of court. The courts would become full of 'criminals', and all because a relatively small number of people thought there was a problem.

The legislation couldn't just cover computer games – to be fair (or unfair) to all trades alike, censorship would have to be applied to the toy industry, the publishing world, and music business, anywhere sexist ideas could lurk.

If legislating against sexism is not a good route, what about setting up a watchdog committee which decides what is allowable and what is not? This is the system adopted by TV in the form of the IBA, the BBC's governors and now the Broadcasting Standards Committee. All rule upon viewing tastes, and judge the inherent violence and sex of programmes screened.

If such a committee were set up for software, not only would it be underworked (there are comparatively few blatantly sexist games), but it would also have to be given teeth. Otherwise it would become like the Press Council and Advertising Standards Authority, the two bodies set up to deal with complaints about newspapers and magazines – they can rap knuckles, but not much else.

Such a committee would have to be able to impose fines or sanctions on companies found guilty of producing sexist material. Ultimately it could throw them out of trade associations and the like, but even that would only be effective if the associations were worth joining in the first place.

Perhaps such a committee would be more useful (and even this is a very debatable point) considering violence in computer games. It might be more helpful than pondering whether a pixel-imperfect Amazonian beauty baring her bosom on a few inches of video screen, or on packaging, stereotypes all women as sex objects and inflames male passions.

The third choice is to work to a voluntary code. This is a better option and it could work, but the emphasis would have to be upon the word 'voluntary'. If games producers didn't want to abide by it, they wouldn't have to, and no-one could stop them.

But of course, there's already a kind of unwritten voluntary code, called taste – few software houses would consider rape or child molestation as suitable subjects for games.

So the fourth course is to leave things as they are. On the face of, perhaps this can be seen as an abdication of responsibility, but I would argue that it is the best choice of all.

Tolerance should be shown to what others do, even if you don't like it. That it is a fundamental principle of democratic societies and you shouldn't stray too far from it.

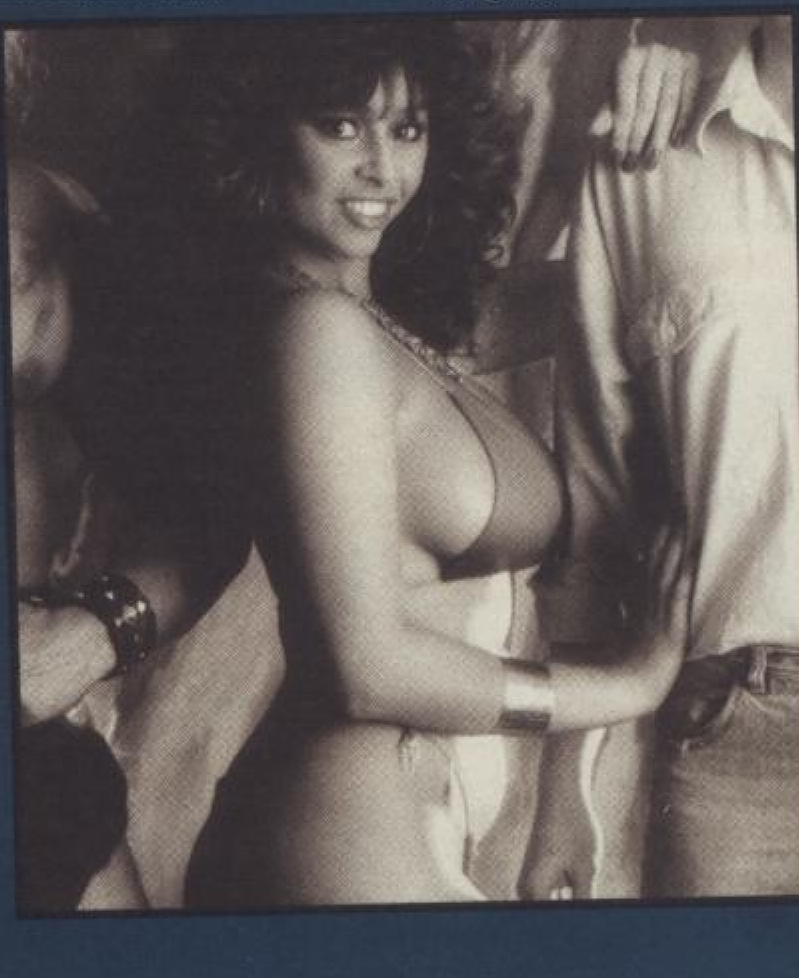
More importantly still, there is no need for an imposed form of censorship – simply because a system of censorship is already in existence and for the most part it works effectively.

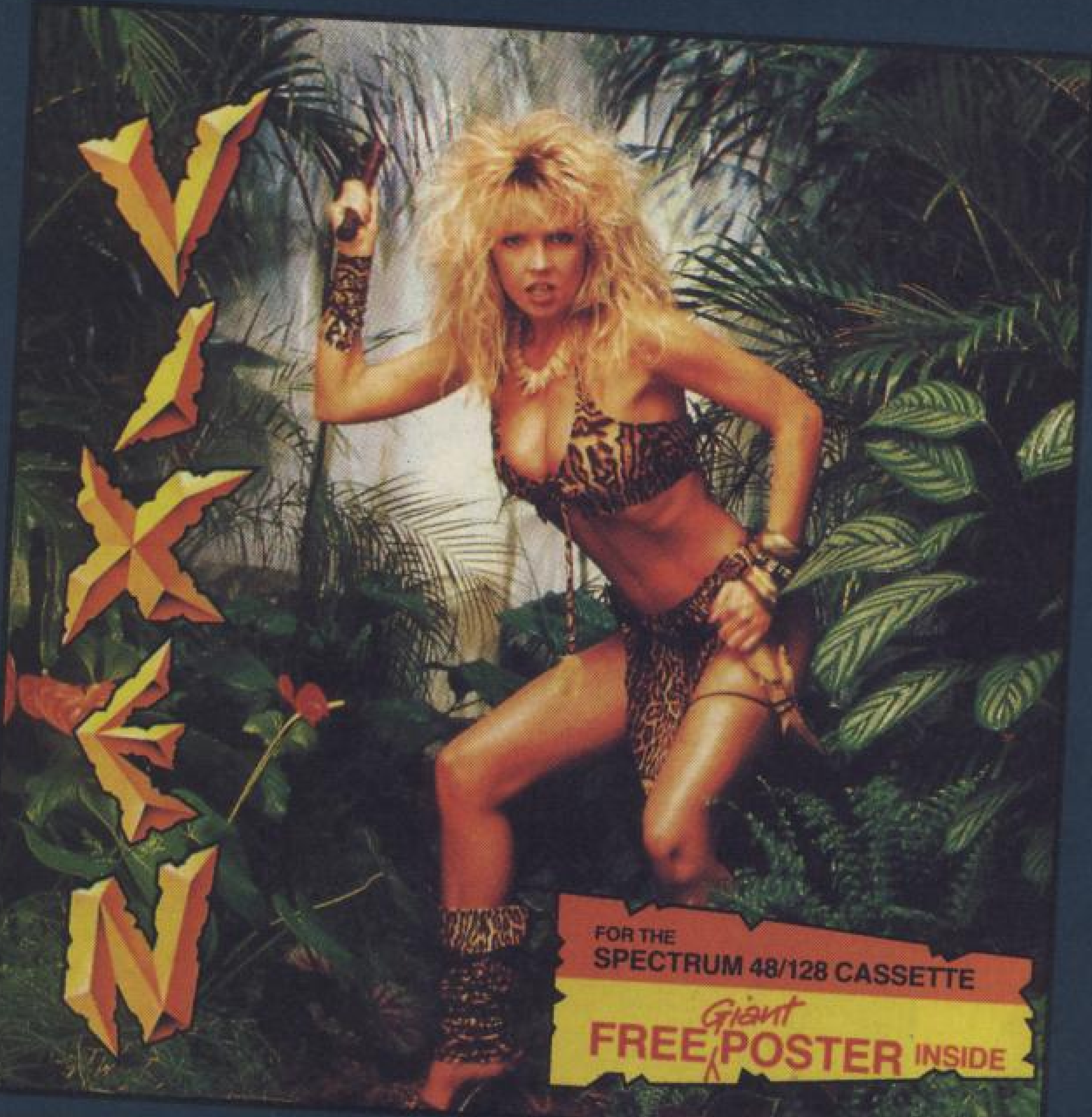
If people don't like the inherent sexism in a game or its packaging, people don't have to buy it. They can raise their objection by leaving it on the shelf. Market forces are a far more potent power than any legislation in changing attitudes.

If large retailers and distributors – or a sufficient number of smaller ones – refuse to distribute or sell games that they find sexist, such games will cease to be produced. No company wants to lose money.

This is the line Boots seem to have taken over *Vixen*.

And at last the software shops won't be incurring the wrath of a flock of fatherly Mr Angries from Purley. Of course, they'll be doing a page 3 Luvly out of a job – but, as they say, that's another ball game.





Be honest – the first thing you think of on seeing a Vixen ad isn't Corinne Russell's brain!
– Kati Hamza

There's nothing wrong with flesh. The naked body is just as beautiful and just as worthy of respect as one covered up with clothes.

The more extreme members of the procensorship lobby might not agree. Their argument reaches right back to the Old Testament: when Adam and Eve ate the apple from the Tree Of Knowledge they covered up their genitals with fig leaves.

So, the supporters of censorship argue, a naked human being, male or female, should only be featured in TV programmes, films and computer games under special circumstances – and certainly not before 9pm!

Fortunately, in our enlightened society, extreme censorship isn't gaining a foothold. In Britain, the established system is fairly low-key and moves to change it are met by controversy. Freedom of the press is valued as a vital democratic right.

After all, a democratic government insists 'on equal rights and privileges for all.' Working on the principle that everyone has a right to vote, it assumes that everyone is prepared to accept personal responsibility.

According to the law, that responsibility doesn't come until you're 18. At 18 you can vote, buy a drink in a pub, visit porn shops and read girlie magazines to your heart's content.

But polls in CRASH and ZZAP! 64 have shown that most people who play computer games – and could be subjected to potentially sexist advertising by software houses – are under 18.

The publishers, advertisers and retailers are all adults, so they should have some responsibility to the underage consumers of their products. That's not to say that young people are idiots or can't think for themselves, but that because they are not yet set in their ways they tend to be more receptive to the influences around them.

When it comes to the portrayal of women, a lot of the influences are negative. It's true that male/female stereotypes are dying out: women are no longer expected to be housewives while their men bring home the bacon, girls have the right to exactly the same education as boys, and employers are forced by law to give women and men the same pay for the same jobs.

These are huge steps in the right direction, but you only have to look around you to see that sexist conditioning still prevails.

In school, more boys take science subjects than girls. In certain areas of business, it's far more difficult for a woman to progress than a man (though the reverse is also true). More women than men are subjected to sexual harassment at work.

From infancy onward, women are given the impression that they are the weaker sex. It's considered more appropriate that a girl should back down in an argument; boys are taught to be aggressive.

You'll often hear children of both sexes say that their mother is 'only a housewife'.

A promiscuous man is more socially acceptable than a promiscuous woman: he's branded a playboy, she a slag.

These prejudices aren't always blatantly expressed, but their influence is subtle and runs deep. If you've lived in a society all your life, you tend to absorb its general opinions without necessarily questioning them. Our earliest experiences and impressions are the most deep-rooted and they're pretty hard to shake off.

If you're a 14-year-old boy and you own a computer, you could be playing games for up to five hours a day. The presentation of women in many of these games and the advertising associated with them is hardly flattering. Barbarian had to rescue a pretty pathetic Princess Mariana, and the victim of *Mermaid Madness* couldn't get away from his beloved quick enough because she was so ugly!

The advertising for these sort of games relies heavily on scantily-clad females – who don't always feature very much in the game – chosen only for their sexual appeal. More often than not, the image they create is totally irrelevant to the product.

Again, it's not the bodies themselves which are unacceptable but *the way in which they're portrayed*. The implication is that there's nothing more to women than bodies and that all they're there for is sex.

Be honest – the first thing you think of on seeing a *Vixen* ad isn't Corinne Russell's brain, is it?

Nobody's arguing that a sexist poster is going to make you treat every woman with disrespect, merely that the way in which it portrays women serves to subtly reinforce sexist attitudes which still prevail.

Working on the democratic principle that everyone has the ability to make up their own mind, we like to impose as little organised censorship as possible. Effectively the moral burden is transferred to the individual. The individuals in this case are the directors and employees of the software companies, the publishers and the retailers.

Already there have been some changes. A few games let you choose between a male and a female character: after the controversy over *Barbarian*, Palace's *Barbarian II* features Mariana in an equal rather than a subjugated role. Boots have refused to sell Martech's *Vixen* with the provocative picture on the cover.

Without intervention from any organised body, the moral burden is transferred to the individuals responsible enough to deal with it. Boots have already shown that they're prepared to accept that responsibility; it remains to be seen whether other companies will follow suit.

THE AUGUST CHARTS



HOTLINE TOP 20

1 (2)	MATCH DAY II	OCEAN
2 (1)	RENEGADE	IMAGINE
3 (8)	TARGET; RENEGADE	IMAGINE
4 (3)	CYBERNOID	HEWSON
5 (6)	EXOLON	HEWSON
6 (7)	DRILLER	INCENTIVE
7 (4)	OUT RUN	US GOLD
8 (10)	HEAD OVER HEELS	OCEAN
9 (12)	ZYNAPS	HEWSON
10 (9)	COMMANDO	ELITE
11 (5)	ELITE	FIREBIRD
12 (15)	GAUNTLET	US GOLD
13 (–)	BUBBLE BOBBLE	FIREBIRD
14 (19)	FLYING SHARK	FIREBIRD
15 (▶)	ACTION FORCE II	VIRGIN
16 (–)	COBRA	OCEAN
17 (▶)	FIREFLY	OCEAN
18 (–)	WIZBALL	OCEAN
19 (17)	MATCH DAY	OCEAN
20 (▶)	IKARI WARRIORS	ELITE

ADVENTURE TOP 10

1 (1)	THE HOBBIT	MELBOURNE HOUSE
2 (2)	LORDS OF MIDNIGHT	BEYOND
3 (3)	STORMBRINGER	M.A.D.
4 (4)	SPELLBOUND	M.A.D.
5 (5)	THE PAWN	RAINBIRD
6 (6)	RED MOON	LEVEL 9
7 (7)	KNIGHT TYME	M.A.D.
8 (8)	KILLED UNTIL DEAD	US GOLD
9 (9)	RIGEL'S REVENGE	FIREBIRD
10 (10)	HEAVY ON THE MAGICK	GARGOYLE GAMES

STRATEGY TOP 10

1 (1)	VULCAN	CCS
2 (2)	LORDS OF MIDNIGHT	BEYOND
3 (3)	ARNHEM	CCS
4 (5)	DOOMDARK'S REVENGE	BEYOND
5 (4)	DESERT RATS	CCS
6 (6)	TOBRUK	PSS
7 (7)	BATTLE OF BRITAIN	PSS
8 (9)	REBELSTAR RAIDERS	FIREBIRD
9 (8)	THEATRE EUROPE	PSS
10 (10)	THEIR FINEST HOUR	CENTURY HUTCHINSON

VIDEO TOP 10

1 (1)	PLATOON	RCA/COLUMBIA
2 (3)	ALIENS	CBS/FOX
3 (2)	LETHAL WEAPON	WARNER
4 (5)	A NIGHTMARE ON ELM ST 3	WARNER
5 (6)	THE LIVING DAYLIGHTS	WARNER
6 (7)	HELLRAISER	NEW WORLD
7 (4)	ROXANNE	RCA/COLUMBIA
8 (▶)	FULL METAL JACKET	WARNER
9 (▶)	THE FLY	CBS/FOX
10 (8)	RADIO DAYS	RCA/COLUMBIA

You now have FOUR charts in which to vote. For games featured in the main software review section vote in the HOTLINE chart. Games covered in Samara's Adventure Trail should be voted for in the ADVENTURE chart. And those games requiring specialised thought and planning (like war games) are voted for in the STRATEGY chart. Also, all your favourite videos can be voted for in the VIDEO chart – old and new, borrowed, but NOT blue!

Just fill in the appropriate form and send your votes off to **CRASH HOTLINE CHART, CRASH ADVENTURE CHART, CRASH STRATEGY CHART** and **CRASH VIDEO CHART**: ***PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB.***

DON'T FORGET, every month we'll pick out five winners for each chart. The first will receive £40 worth of software of their choice. The four runners-up will each get a CRASH hat and a CRASH T-shirt – a total of **20** winners. All you have to do is walk to the post box . . .

CHART VOTING FORMS .... page 112

WINNERS

__Tamas Kucsha__ from St John's Wood in London was the first pulled out of the magic HOTLINE hat this month (after two rabbits) – and wins a magnificent £40 worth of software. The four runners-up are __Justin Penrose__ from Folkestone; __Jonathan Webb__ of Sunderland; __Matthew Perkins__ from Cardiff and __John Vincent__ of Attleborough in Norfolk.

The winner of the Adventure Chart's £40 worth of software is __Guy Rowland__ who hails from Bishops Stortford in Hertfordshire. The fearless four runners-up – who get a CRASH hat and T-shirt – are __Steven Wreford__ of Exeter; __Wayne Rogers__ from Sholing in Hampshire; __Neil Hopkinson__ of Fareham and __Michael McNiff__ from Normanton in West Yorkshire.

First out of the STRATEGY sack this month was __Ciarán Walsh__ from Dublin (luck of the Irish) who gets £40 worth of software, to play on those lonely battlefields. Getting hats and T-shirts are __Mark Blackman__ from Harrow; __Charlotte Chipohase__ of Oxford; __Anthony Balme__ from Cosby in Leicestershire and __Lloyd Breen__ from Elstow in Bedfordshire.

First prize in the CRASH VIDEO chart goes to __G White__ from Edenthorpe in South Yorkshire. The four runners-up are __Paul Ratcliffe__ from Cawthorne near Barnsley; __Lloyd Strickland__ of Calne in Wiltshire; __Daniel Worf__ from Belvedere and last, but not least, __Matthew Payne__ of Churchdown in Gloucestershire. CRASH hats and T-shirts will be beamed to all runners-up.

CRASH ZX SPECTRUM HYPERMARKET

Feel you deserve another piece of the action? Bothered about having to travel far for software? Bored by the limited choice available on the high street? Fed up with being charged full retail price? Well, don't! Whether top games software, high-tech joysticks or designer T-Shirts or just simply dustprotective keyboard covers, CRASH HYPERMARKET will despatch at special discount prices, efficiently and fast. The incredibly low deals include VAT, postage & packing.

CRASH COMPUTER COVERS



PROUD . . . of your untouched, virgin-new keyboard? Don't let it bite the dust, protect it from coffee, biscuit nibbles, screen fall-out or just simple plain home-variety dust.
ASHAMED . . . of your grotty, coffee-stained, dust-cloaked keyboard? Cover the mess up and protect your Habitat environment with a CRASH keyboard cover.

RUBBER-KEYED SPECTRUM COVER
OFFER 3.00, C001H
SPECTRUM+ COVER
OFFER 3.25, C002H
SPECTRUM 128 COVER
OFFER 3.75, C003H
SPECTRUM+2 COVER
OFFER 4.00, C004H

CRASH SPORTS BAG

Have CRASH bag will travel in style. This top quality silver blue sports bag will feel right whether you jet set round the world or simply walk to the local sports centre. Comes with enormous cavity and a useful end pocket.
CRASH SPORTS BAG
OFFER 12.95, C115H





POWERPLAY CRUISER
This excellent joystick features microswitch directional control and fire action. A unique variable tension control allows the user to adjust the direction control to extra sensitive, normal and firm. A wide base and four suction cups provide good table-top operation.
POWERPLAY CRUISER
OFFER £9.99, C094H

EUROMAX PROFESSIONAL AUTO-FIRE
All the quality of the PROFESSIONAL, with the added bonus of the AUTO FIRE option (may not work on some computer systems).
EUROMAX PROFESSIONAL AUTOFIRE
OFFER 18.95, C097H

DYNAMICS COMPETITION PRO 5000 (normal)
Features arcade quality microswitches, dual fire buttons, robust steel shaft and rubber return for smooth control and longer life. Extra long 1.5m cord
DYNAMICS COMPETITION PRO 5000 (normal)
OFFER 13.50, RRP 14.95, C098H

EUROMAX JOYSTAR
This is an excellent microswitch-action joystick featuring precision top and front fire buttons and Auto Fire. It can be operated handheld or can be mounted on the table via vice-grip suction cups. Auto Fire may not work with certain interfaces.
EUROMAX JOYSTAR
OFFER 9.95, C093H



HYPERMARKET

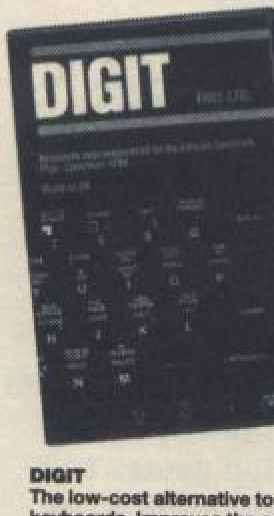
KONIX SPEEDKING
The joystick that actually fits your hand, with a fire button angled for your trigger finger to ensure accurate high-speed action. Solid steel breakproof shaft with neat clicking sound for every position move you make.
KONIX SPEEDKING
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High durability, rapid response and ultra sensitive movement accuracy from this advanced ergonomic design. Ideal for left and right hand play. 1.5m cord
EUROMAX PROFESSIONAL
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COMCON PROGRAMMABLE JOYSTICK INTERFACE
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COMCON PROGRAMMABLE JOYSTIC INERFACE
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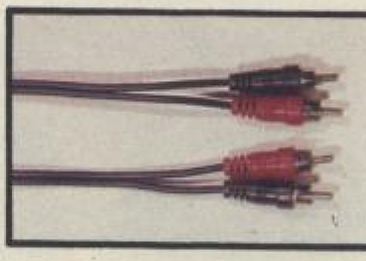


DIGIT
The low-cost alternative to add-on keyboards. Improves the action and feel of the standard SPECTRUM PLUS keyboard by replacing the rubber membrane with individual coil springs and plungers. Provides ultra-light key stroke.
DIGIT
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Link your Spectrum+3 to your cassette recorder and gain access to your large collection of Spectrum 48 tape software.
SPECTRUM+3 CASSETTE LEADS
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+2 ADAPTOR
Links up any Atari-compatible joystick to your SPECTRUM+2 and SPECTRUM+3 joystick output connectors.
+2 ADAPTOR
OFFER 2.50, C119H





COMCON TWIN same as above, but with two parallel output joystick connectors.
COMCON TWIN
OFFER 13.95, C117H

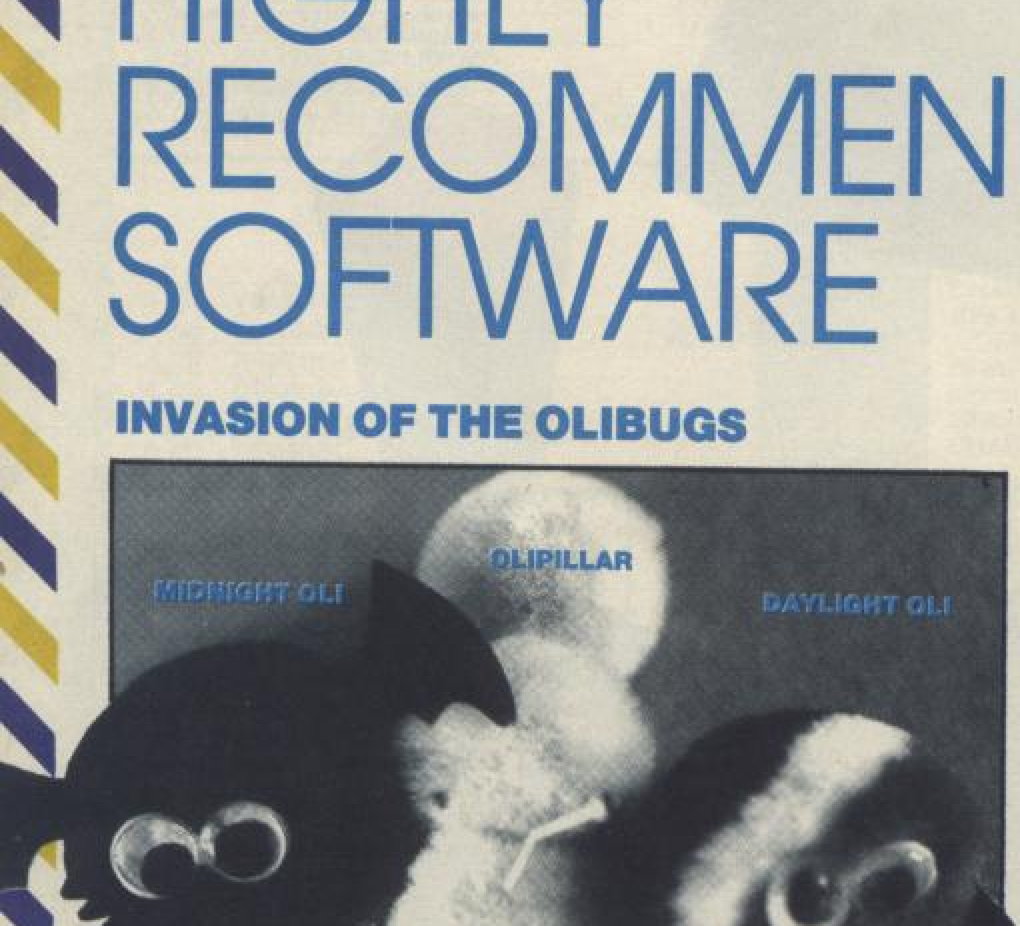
QUICKSHOT 2+2 JOYSTICK
Modified QUICKSHOT 2+2 joystick makes use of the second fire action on the COMCON interface by splitting the two joystick trigger switches for independent operation.
QUICKSHOT 2+2 JOYSTICK
OFFER 9.95, C120H



DYNAMICS COMPETITION PRO 5000 (clear)
The designer joystick with see-through body.
DYNAMICS COMPETITION PRO 5000 (clear)
OFFER 14.00, RRP 15.95, C099H

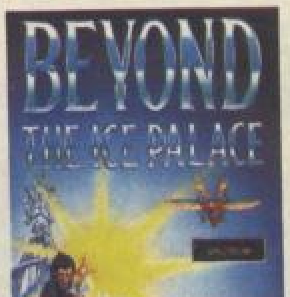
HIGHLY RECOMMENDED SOFTWARE

INVASION OF THE OLIBUGS



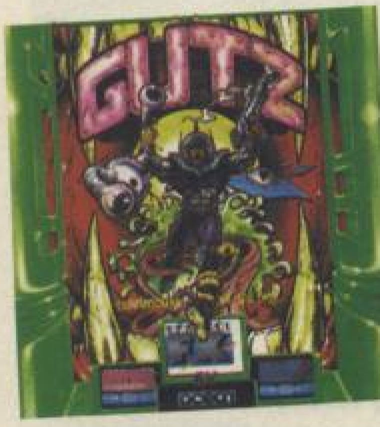
These critters are so mad keen to travel, they will jump into any jiffy bag with software worth more than £5.00 (Order value, not RRP price!). Yes, if you order software worth £5.00 or more, you will get a free fluffy OLI BUG. Just specify on your order form which little critter you want, and hey presto, you'll have a new little pet. Remember though, keep them well away from water and do NOT, under any circumstances, feed them after midnight . . . You have been warned!

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ACTIONFORCE II disk, Virgin Games
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BIONIC COMMANDO disk, GO!
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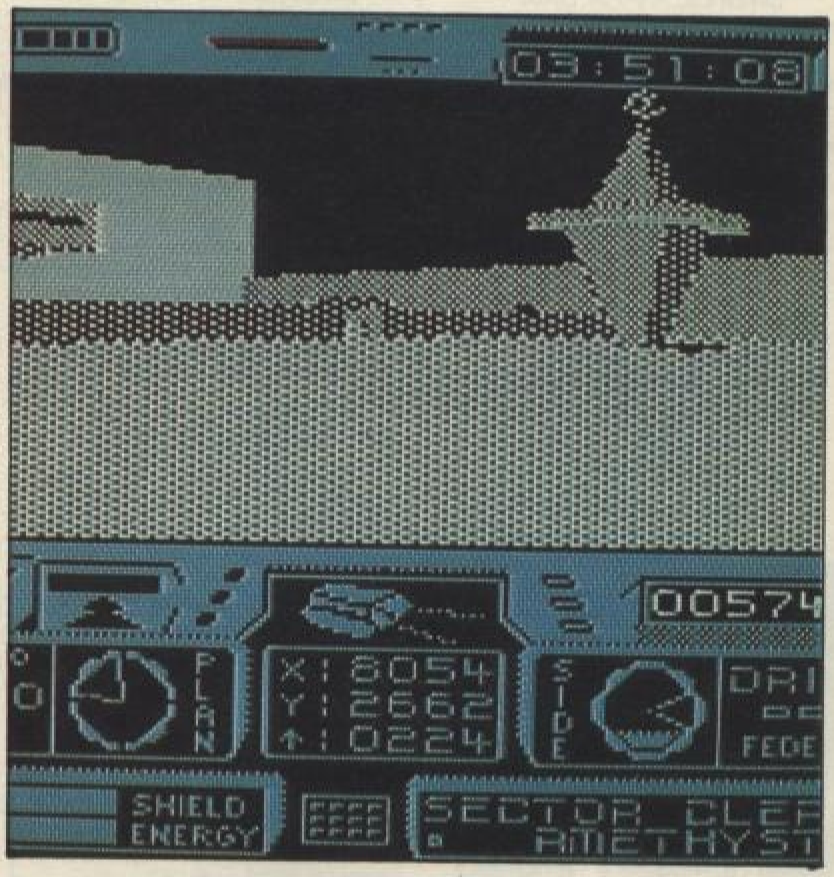
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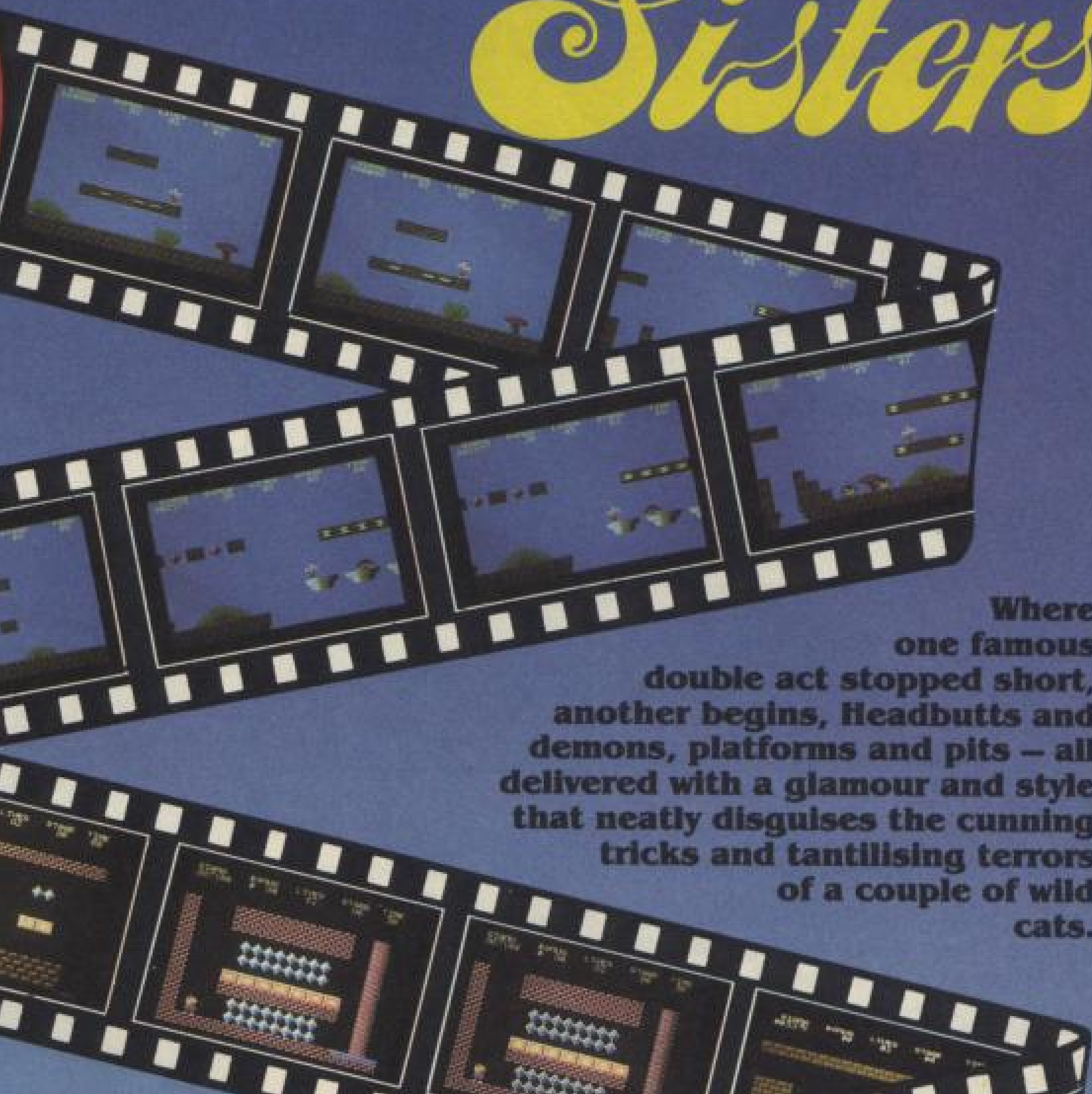
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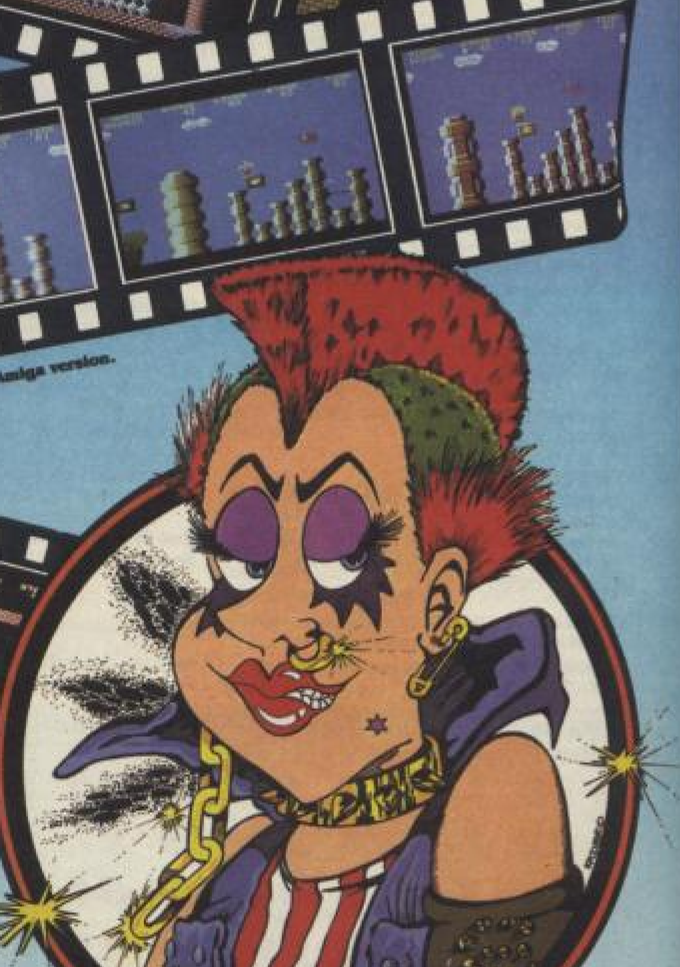


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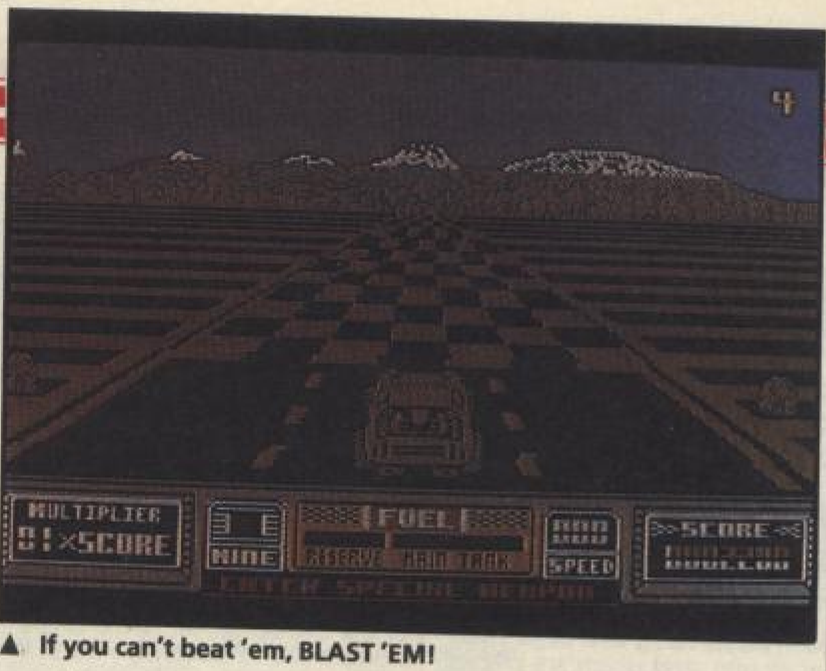
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ROADBLASTERS



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Producer: **US Gold**
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Fresh from the arcades, the rubber-burning Atari coin-op has reached the Spectrum, courtesy of DJL Software and US Gold. Set in the distant future, *Roadblasters* puts the player in the driving seat of a high performance, heavily armoured car.

The player controls the car,

NICK

" Another fantastic arcade machine comes to the Spectrum. But is Roadblasters **just a repetition of other failed arcade conversions? Well, it almost has the speed, colour and excitement of the arcade machine and it is VERY addictive. The graphics are similar to** Nigel Mansell's Grand Prix, **with a detailed main car and background, but with the added attraction of the extra weapons. Each level has a beautifully unique backdrop, which smoothly scrolls in the background. There's a good mixture of simulation and shoot-'em-up but a bit more colour in the explosions – not just green – would have been welcome. Not exactly the arcade machine, but addictive and playable. "**

83%

PHIL

" The popular coin-op has at last made it to the Spectrum. Car racing games are two a penny, but the inclusion of weapons in Roadblasters **helps to make it more interesting than most. The game plays rather like a 3-D version of** Spy Hunter, **with your car speeding down the track and blasting the enemies. The collection of extra weaponry as progress is made is also reminiscent of this ageing game: instead of a lorry delivering it, a jet drops it from overhead. The graphics are rather bland – the monochromatic track scrolls fairly smoothly till you come to a bend, when everything gets quite jerky. The car itself is well-drawn but as the wheels don't appear to move, it seems to float down the highway. The landscape in the distance scrolls very smoothly and contributes to the sense of speed. Despite the mostly bland presentation, roaring down the freeway blasting other cars out of the way is strangely satisfying and, with fifty levels of action, you certainly get good value for money. "**

85%

burning up the miles through fifty levels of ever-changing scenery. The track is shown in vanishing point perspective and, as the car negotiates the many twists and turns, a distant landscape scrolls around on the horizon. If the car veers off the side of the road into one of the many trees and rocks, it disintegrates in a massive explosion.

Racing down the freeway is only half the game: many deadly enemies are lurking on the track. These include the heavily armoured command cars, sleek fast stingers and erratic rat jeeps which all stalk the highway, trying to blast the player's car into oblivion. As well as these moving enemies, the racetrack is littered with deadly mines and missile firing gun turrets positioned at the roadside.

The car starts off with a standard laser cannon to blast his enemies in the futuristic car chase. As progress is made, a friendly jet appears overhead and drops useful extra weaponry such as cruise missiles, a nitro-injector and electronic shields – useful for those tricky moments on the highway.

Zooming through the countryside really burns up fuel and this machine is a real gas guzzler. Fortunately, scattered around the track are red and green gas globes which can be collected for fuel.

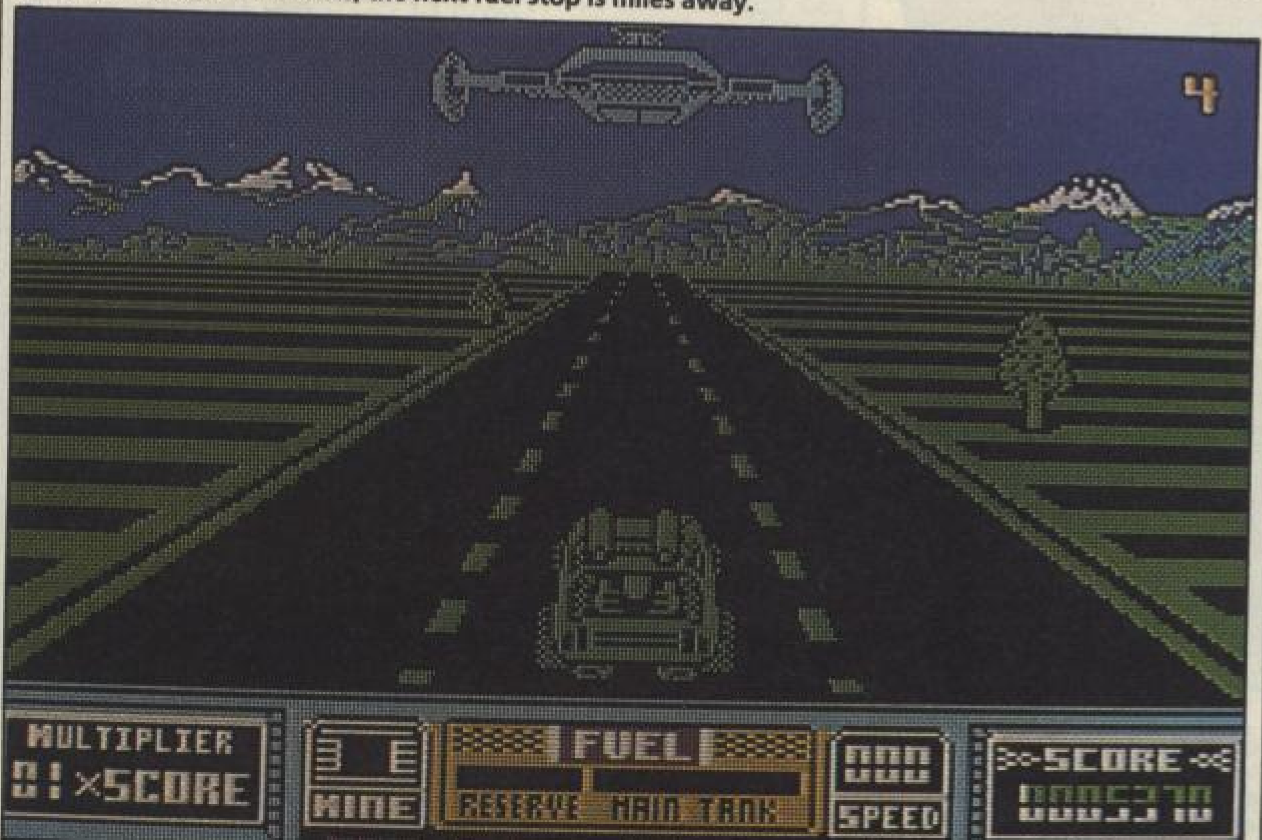
If the car reaches the end of a track (signified by a chequered piece of road) before running out of fuel, the player can progress onto the next of fifty levels to continue his or her roadblasting exploits in another part of the racing world.

KATI

" Roadblasters **is such a fantastic arcade game, that any home conversion is bound to be a bit of a disappointment. Although US Gold have gone a long way towards recreating the atmosphere of the original, the game just lacks that extra graphical edge. There's plenty to keep you occupied as you go roaring down the highway, blasting enemies, guzzling petrol and picking up extra equipment pods. The vehicle doesn't exactly seem like it's breaking the speed limit but the frantic track action soon takes you mind off that. Obviously it would be impossible to recreate the breath-taking action of the original, but one or two more explosions wouldn't have gone amiss. Unlike its the arcade counterpart,** Roadblasters **the computer game doesn't quite stand head and shoulders above the crowd – but at least you'll be playing this for longer than** Out Run.

84%

▼ Watch those instruments, the next fuel stop is miles away.



COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: detailed cars against a mostly monochromatic backdrop
Sound: catchy title 128K tune with roaring in-game sound effects
General rating: initially enjoyable and exciting gameplay, with long-lasting addictiveness

Presentation	85%
Graphics	78%
Playability	86%
Addictive qualities	84%
OVERALL	**84%**

BATTLE SHIPS

Producer: **Encore**
Retail price: **£1.99**
Author: **Keith Burkhill**

Previously released only on a compilation, Elite's *Battle Ships* is now available at a budget price.

Just as in the traditional game, each player has a fleet of six ships (of varying size) which are placed on a twenty-by-twenty box map. Battle is ready to commence.

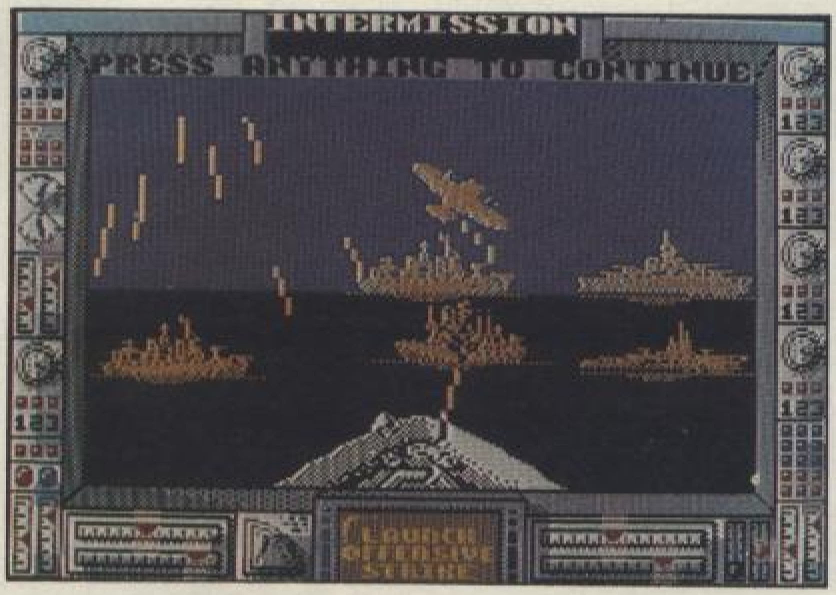
You fire shots at squares (targets) on the map, hoping to hit enemy ships. On selection of the last target, the screen switches to a graphical representation of the enemy fleet at sea. Missiles are automatically fired from the player's ship as aircraft fly overhead. A direct hit appears as a red square on the map.

Players take turns to fire till an entire fleet is sunk and the winner rejoices in a victory sail past.

CRITICISM

● " *Battle Ships* is basically just the same as the pencil 'n' paper game. The graphical display of the action is purely decorative, although it enhances the atmosphere of the battle. Unfortunately, the computer opponent is extremely easy to beat and there are no skill levels, so to get the best out of the game two players are needed. The presentation is excellent with well-drawn ships and an impressive title screen. If you're looking for a game with depth then this isn't it – but as a simple and pretty version of the classic game, *Battle Ships* works well and is definitely worth a look. "
PHIL **74%**

▼ Everything stops for tea





▲ A hit, a very palpable hit

● **" Hooray! My favourite boardgame on the Spectrum (well I've got the electronic version actually).** Battle Ships **is an excellent boardgame conversion, but it does play slightly differently from the original. Instead of taking one shot and waiting for the opposition to make their move, you have multiple shots at the enemy. This new system makes the game faster and more addictive as you can watch your opponent's ships blowing up, without worrying about which of yours they're going to hit all the time. The graphics are detailed and show all the different ships in all their stages of decomposition. It's a pity that there's no tune and only the odd sound effect when a ship takes a hit, but even without them** Battle Ships **remains a favourite. Thoroughly addictive. "**
NICK **81%**

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: detailed and atmospheric
Sound: sparse firing effects
Options: definable keys. One or two players plus multi-player tournament
General rating: even more fun than the pencil 'n'paper version

Presentation	79%
Graphics	68%
Playability	77%
Addictive qualities	78%
OVERALL	**78%**

READY STEADY GO

Producer: **Alternative Software**
Retail price: **£1.99**

Do you want to get fit? Well, slump down in your favourite armchair and prepare to give your trigger finger a good workout. There are four events for one or two players: track hurdling, canoeing, cycling, and penalty saving.

In the first event the competitor must complete five laps of a race track within the imposed time limit. Misjudging the hurdles results in the loss of valuable time.

▼ **Mr and Mrs Splodge are taking their daily walk**



On to the canoeing. The objective here is to row four lengths against the clock. There are two types of rock and the current to contend with. Fail to take sufficient care and a holed canoe is the result.

Back on to the three-laned track for 12 laps of cycling. You can change lanes at will, as long as your opponent isn't occupying it. Careful use of the lanes ensures a safe and speedy victory.

Ever fancied being a top class goalie? The fourth event puts you in goal facing a determined opponent who tries to score ten penalty shots.

CRITICISM

● " My poor fingers! Remember *Daley Thompson's Decathlon* all those years ago? You had to wear out your Spectrum membrane to complete one level. Well, multiply the frustration of that by ten, and you could be getting close to *Ready Steady Go*. The control method is appalling, the graphics are basic and there is hardly any sound at all. If that isn't enough to put you off, then this will – it takes what seems like five minutes for the computer to recognise that you've pressed start and it's almost impossible to qualify. Don't buy this unless you have super-hydraulic fingers and a very high level of patience. "
NICK **05%**

● **" Watching stick-like sprites hobbling around badly drawn backgrounds isn't my idea of fun. Gameplay is just as primitive as the graphics: any interest I might have had was immediately crushed. After half an hour of bashing away on the keyboard, I came away with painful fingers, and a throat sore from shouting at my wobbly character sprite as he huffed and puffed his way around the screen. If you're a sports fan, stick to some other simulation of your favourite games. "**
MARK **19%**

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: stick men, primitive backdrops
Sound: none
General rating: a very basic joystick-waggling game with no appeal

Presentation	12%
Graphics	8%
Playability	11%
Addictive qualities	8%
OVERALL	**13%**

STUNT BIKE SIMULATOR

Producer: **Silverbird**
Retail price: **£1.99**
Author: **D White**

Ace stuntman, Chad Adams, has set himself a number of tasks to show that he is the best in the world. His speciality is performing daring feats on a stunt motorbike.

The player must guide Chad through five levels of dangerous stunts, all of which involve controlling his bike and avoiding obstacles in the horizontally scrolling road. The player's starting score is reduced by hitting obstacles and the passage of time. Unless a stage is completed before this score drops to nil, the player loses one of his three lives.

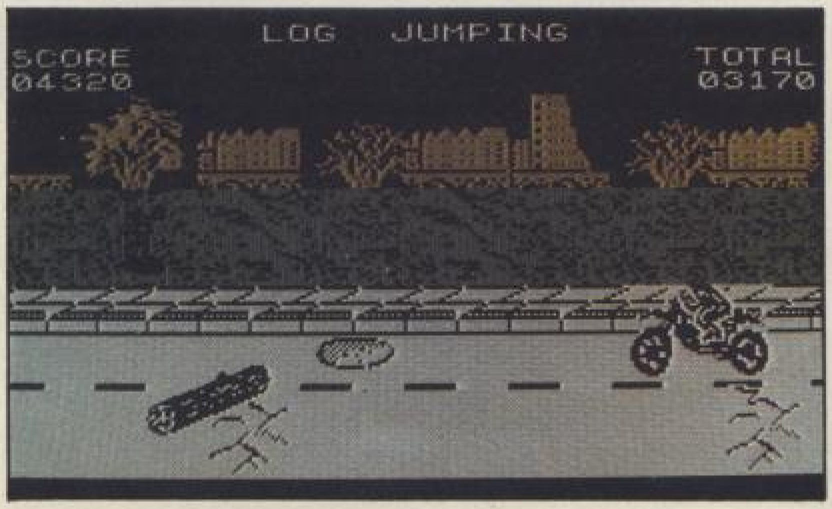
Chad starts the first level in his hang-glider, flying above the road. The player controls the riderless bike, weaving it between obstacles till the opportunity arises to drop Chad onto it. Next it's on to the log jump. As well as avoiding static obstacles, he must bunny hop logs which roll towards him.

Level three contains even more danger as Chad attempts to leap off his bike through hoops of fire. If he fails to jump at the right time, the fire will burn him, reducing his score and wasting valuable time.

Chad's next feat involves riding his bike up a ramp into the back of a moving lorry.

The final task is to jump from his bike and catch the hanger suspended from a moving helicopter. If he achieves all this, Chad will have proved that he's the best in the business.

▼ **Attack of the killer sausage!**



CRITICISM

● " Although *Stunt Bike Simulator* contains five levels, they all take place on an identical scrolling road with nothing but a change in backdrop. The bike itself is very simply animated and the scrolling is extremely jerky – one character block at a time. The first level is soon mastered, although how Chad manages to steer his stunt bike when he's up in the hang-glider I'll never know! Both the second and third levels are initially difficult to master, while the final levels are comparatively easy. Such a hotchpotch of difficult and very easy parts soon loses its appeal. "
PHIL **57%**

● **" The graphics are blocky and most barely resemble the objects they are supposed to depict (the helicopter looks like a large airborne blob).** Stunt Bike Simulator **will keep most purchasers busy for the first couple of hours or so but I can't see it having much long term appeal. "**
MARK **53%**

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Kempston
Graphics: jerky, blocky and awkward
Sound: limited to basic spot effects
General rating: an uninspired simulator that won't breathe life into more than a few hours of play

Presentation	53%
Graphics	52%
Playability	61%
Addictive qualities	54%
OVERALL	**55%**

OCTAN

Producer: **Silverbird**
Retail price: **£2.99**
Author: **Robert Gill**

When the demons of Octan were destroyed, everyone rejoiced at the demise of the most cruel and evil rulers the universe had ever known. Unfortunately, one of them escaped destruction, and plans to destroy all sentient life. A brave young pilot is charged with the mission to travel the eight planes of the planet and destroy this evil threat.

As your craft journeys over the vertically scrolling landscape, the demon's henchmen make their presence felt. These are dealt with by a swift jab on the laser button while inanimate obstacles need to be exploded by missiles.

▼ **Satisfying, but room for improvement**



Shooting silos reveals lettered icons. When collected, these endow your craft with extra weapons, points and bonus lives.

At the end of each level you encounter one of the demon's mammoth servants. Survive to the end of the eighth stage and you meet the Demon of Octan himself.

CRITICISM

● " Mediocrity is the name of this very average, shoot-'em-up from Firebird's budget label, Silverbird. Tedium begins to set in almost as soon as you start playing. The demonic minions swarming around the player's craft are well-drawn, but the turgid control method, coupled with the slow rate of fire, soon kills any enthusiasm that might be lurking at the back of your mind. The budget sector of the market has come up with some great games. Unfortunately for Joe Public, this isn't one of them. "
MARK **40%**

● **" Despite its rather bland name, Octan turns out to be a fairly good quality, smoothly-scrolling shoot-'em-up. The green background is rather garish with a particularly nasty pattern of rectangles that looks like a very naff brand of wallpaper. Gameplay is reminiscent of** Xevious **but the extra bonus icon feature demands thoughtful play rather than pure mindless violence. The caterpillar-like aliens at the end of each level are neat, but the fast and furious action gets repetitive after a while. Shoot-'em-up fans looking for some cheap fun should enjoy it. "**
PHIL **61%**

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Kempston
Graphics: unexceptional monochrome
Sound: mostly spot effects
Options: definable keyboard
General rating: a standard quality shoot-'em-up at a cheap and cheerful price



Presentation	58%
Graphics	60%
Playability	58%
Addictive qualities	54%
OVERALL	**51%**

EUROPEAN 5-A-SIDE

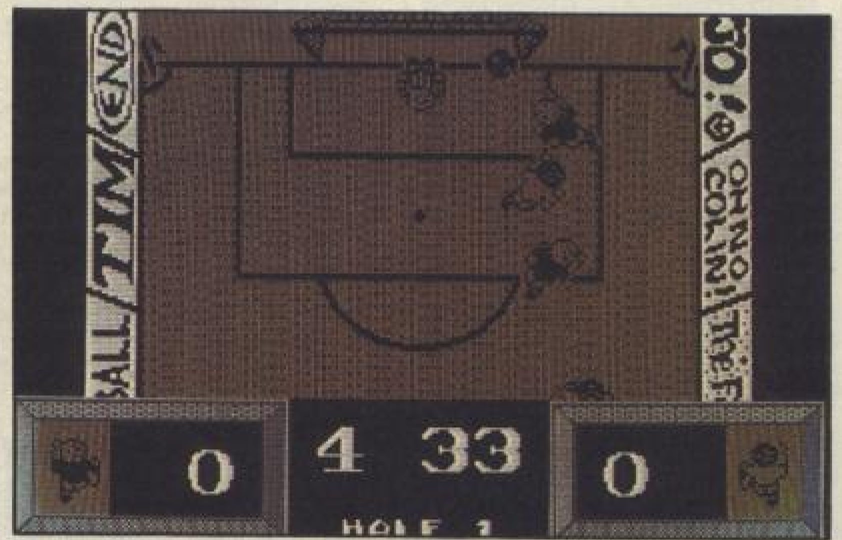
Producer: **Silverbird**
Retail price: **£1.99**
Author: **Timothy Closs**

After watching England's performance in the European Championships recently, you might think you could do better yourself. Timothy Closs, programmer of the CRASH Smashes *I Ball* and *I Ball 2*, now gives you the opportunity to play *European 5-A-Side*.

The match is played on an aerially viewed, vertically scrolling pitch surrounded by a barrier against which you can bounce the ball to pass an opponent.

You always control the player nearest to the ball; highlighted by a flashing arrow. Dribbling is automatic and tackling is achieved by colliding with the player in possession. You can kick along the ground or into the air. The ball's size gives an indication of its height.

The goalkeeper can only be controlled when the ball goes inside the six yard box. He can dive left or right and, if he makes contact with the ball, immediately lobs it up the field.



▲ Goal!

CRITICISM

● " I couldn't believe it when I heard that Timothy Closs had written a football game, but the first thing that strikes you about the presentation of *European 5-A-Side* is its similarity to the superb *I Ball* games. There's even the same use of digitised speech which, unfortunately, isn't quite as clear. The overhead view is certainly a new angle to football games, though the players move quite slowly, especially when there are several on the screen. The real disappointment is that the computer team is so easy to beat and presents no challenge whatsoever. The only redeeming feature is the two-player mode which should increase the lastability of the game. *European 5-A-Side* is not in the same league as *Match Day II* but at the price it's not too bad and should appeal more to younger football fans. "
PHIL **68%**

● **" I have never been overly fond of football games, and** European 5-A-Side **has done absolutely nothing to change this opinion. Graphically the game has some nice touches – especially the bird's eye view of the pitch. But sadly, the whole game is far too easy to play. "**
MARK **44%**

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: smoothly animated, monochromatic sprites
Sound: snappy title tune plus spot effects and the odd piece of digitised speech
Options: one or two players, choice of pitch colour and match duration
General rating: not a bad little football game, even better with a friend . . .

Presentation	66%
Graphics	71%
Playability	57%
Addictive qualities	54%
OVERALL	**56%**

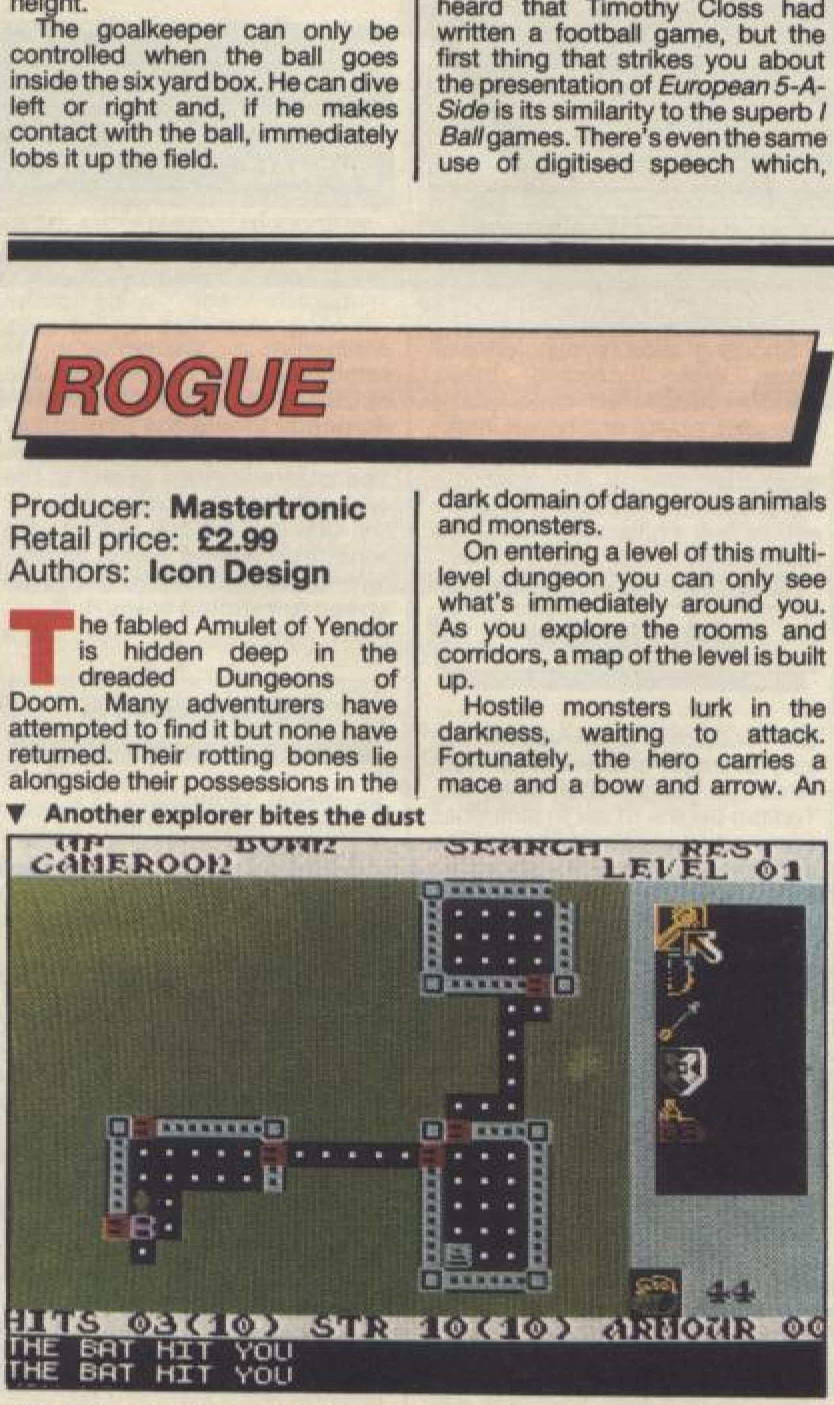
ROGUE

Producer: **Mastertronic**
Retail price: **£2.99**
Authors: **Icon Design**

The fabled Amulet of Yendor is hidden deep in the dreaded Dungeons of Doom. Many adventurers have attempted to find it but none have returned. Their rotting bones lie alongside their possessions in the dark domain of dangerous animals and monsters.

On entering a level of this multi-level dungeon you can only see what's immediately around you. As you explore the rooms and corridors, a map of the level is built up.

Hostile monsters lurk in the darkness, waiting to attack. Fortunately, the hero carries a mace and a bow and arrow. An icon selection system allows these and other collected items (magic potions, scrolls etc) to be used. Four extra commands allow you to move up and down stairs, search rooms and rest.

▼ **Another explorer bites the dust**


CRITICISM

● " From the title and the cover picture, (why the bikini-clad woman?), I expected the usual budget-style arcade adventure. Actually, *Rogue* is a very rare attempt at a *Dungeons And Dragons* game. With such a variety of objects and weapons available, there is a fair amount of strategy involved in working out what to use, and when to use it. Progress through the dungeon is quite easy – even with the many varied monsters and animals around. The graphics aren't exactly brilliant – just one block characters moving through an even blockier dungeon – although they do improve when magnified. There's one minor drawback, though: occasionally you can get stuck on a level with no exit and are forced to quit the game. Despite this, *Rogue* makes a refreshing change from our usual diet of shoot-'em-ups and arcade adventures. "
PHIL **63%**

● **" Despite its simplistic and occasionally blocky graphics,** Rogue **is a brave and rather playable attempt at a** Dungeons And Dragons **type of game. As a fair amount of strategy is involved, especially when things get tricky, it means that your brain is used for a change. Don't worry though, your trigger finger needn't feel left out as the meanies that roam the many levels of the dungeons are pretty tough to beat (what on earth is an emu doing in a dungeon?). Take a look, if you like this sort of exploration game:** Rogue **should keep you amused for quite a while. "**
MARK **63%**

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: basic and blocky
Sound: blip, bleep, blip etc
Options: load/save game
General rating: an interesting stab at a computerised version of a *Dungeons And Dragons* style game

Presentation	45%
Graphics	35%
Playability	68%
Addictive qualities	62%
OVERALL	**63%**

KEMSHU

Producer: **Cult**
Retail price: **£1.99**
Author: **Nick Flemming**

Kemshu is set on a square board that is split into 100 multi-coloured squares. The objective is to change all the colours on the board to a single target colour, indicated at the right of the screen.

Using a cursor, squares can be moved across the board in rows. Four blocks of the target colour need to be placed around a differently coloured block to transform it.

Changing the colour of all the squares within the given time limit gains access to the next level. A status box to the right of the screen shows the present score, the percentage of screen area covered, time limit and the target colour.

CRITICISM

● " *Brainstorm* (90%, Issue 52) almost drove me up the wall with its simple but addictive gameplay. *Kemshu* has similarly tied my brain into knots. The graphics are simple but effective (you can't go far wrong with a screen full of coloured blocks) but sound is sadly missing – a cheerful tune would have gone down well. Control is easy to master, so you don't spend hours rifling through bedsheet-sized instruction manuals. The saved time can be put to good use puzzling over the best way to solve the game. Overall *Kemshu*, although not quite in the *Brainstorm* league, is a simple strategy game definitely worth the £1.99 price tag. "

MARK **81%**

● **" Puzzle games seem to be few and far between – it's nice to see that software houses haven't abandoned the genre completely. The idea behind** Kemshu **is very simple but play gets quite difficult on the higher levels. If time is running out, the action can become quite frantic. The game involves quick thinking rather than complex strategy. As you try desperately to complete each level, success often depends more on lucky reactions. As every round involves exactly the same type of basic strategy (only the decreasing time limits add variety), gameplay does get repetitive after a while.** Kemshu **lacks the variety of a game such as** Brainstorm **but it is very playable in the short term. "**

PHIL **77%**

▼ **This may be a very attractive patchwork quilt, but it's not going to win any points**



COMMENTS

Joysticks: Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: bright and functional
Sound: none
Options: definable keyboard
General rating: initially addictive, it's not likely to keep a storm raging in your brain for long

Presentation	63%
Graphics	53%
Playability	77%
Addictive qualities	73%
OVERALL	**79%**

THE CRASH

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PUZZLED
...NOW HE'S GONE AND HIT THE 'MIMIC' BUTTON AND HE'S A BIT CONFVUW.. CONFOOS... ER... PUZZLED.
FUNNY..! I THOUGHT I HEARD SOMEONE SAYING "HAH!" MEBBE THERE'S SOMEONE ELSE IN HERE...
HALLO-EEEEE
HALLO-WEEEE
PEERING OUT, OUR HERO SPOTS A STRANGER...
THERE IT GOES AGAIN...
I'LL ASK THAT LI'L STRANGER IF HE KNOWS WO'S HAPPNIN'...
'SCUSE ME...
'SCUSE ME-EE
BUT THERE IS NO EXCUSE FOR UPSETTING....
THAM
THAM
WHIP
WHIP
DANGEROUS DENNIS McALIEN !!
DANGEROUS DENNIS NEVER MISSES, AND THE GIANT ROBOT CONTAINING OUR HERO, TOPPLES....
EH?
WHA..?
WHA..?
FOOP
...TOWARDS THE LOCAL MUNITIONS FACTORY...
FWIP
FWIP
FWIP
FWIP
FWIP
FWIP
FWIP
HAMMO
KATOWEE
BADDOW
THAM
THAM
WHICH IS WHY THEY CALL HIM DANGEROUS....!!
AS THE SMOKE CLEARS..... SOMETHING STIRS IN THE CRATER...
ACK!
WELL...? DON'T JUST STAN' THERE LOOKIN' STUPID...
IT DAT LOONY!
GIVE ME A HAND!!
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
HOKAY!
SNIGGER
HAIEE
CAN OUR HERO STAND ALL THIS HUMILIATION...? CAN OUR HERO EVEN STAND...? WILL HIS HAIR GROW BACK AS QUICK AS IT DID LAST TIME...?

WINNERS & PRIZES

ACCOLADE AHEAD
Issue 53

With the Seoul Olympics just around the corner **Peter Unwin** from London N22 4HD is bound to find plenty of uses for the triffic sports bag containing numerous golfing products, slinky sports towel and £70 tracksuit that Accolade were giving away in Issue 53. The twenty lucky runners-up, who each get a copy of Accolade's *Mini-Putt* (when it's released!) and a trendy Accolade T-shirt, are . . .
Alex Herbrand, GERMANY; Steven Downey, W.Sussex BN14 7LL; Benjamin Tiley, Bristol BS16 5NE; Mr S A H Milledge, Hereford HR4 9RH; Paul Ratcliffe, Barnsley S75 4ES; Matthew Portlock, Kent TN10 3AP; Phil March, Surrey CR3 3JD; Alistair Wallace, Stirling FK7 7NP; Peter Jones, West Midlands B73 5JG; Mr Michael Jones, Birmingham, B32 1NA; E Gillespie, Beds LU3 2AT; Michael Ragg, Humberside HU12 9QH; Trevor Mullen, Birmingham B34 6HR; Robert Ammon, W.Yorks HD5 8UN; Daniel Pascall, W.Yorks HX4 8NN; Michael Armitt, Staffordshire ST7 4PS; Liam Gisby, Scotland KY3 0BP; Alexander Dockerty, Essex CM24 8BD; Merle Riseborough, Norfolk NR21 0AD; James Brownass, Surrey CR3 3HG.

SAT-ELITE
Issue 53

Who wants an Amstrad satellite TV dish? Well, **Dave Chapple** from Cornwall certainly doesn't. He was the winner of a fabulous Zeta Satellite dish and receiver, a years subscription to a top satellite magazine AND a *Buggy Boy* game, T-shirt, mug and poster (it's the postman I feel sorry for) from those generous people at Elite. The 25 runners-up who get everything but the satellite stuff are . . . **Colin McBurnie, W.Yorks WF12 7PL; Jeremy Percival, Worcs B48 7AU; Michael Slater, Lancs BL0 9EN; Mark Bowen, NN3 1HW; Brendan O'Brien, Birmingham B9 5QD; L Millea, Liverpool L19 2PQ; Roy Harwood, Sussex RH13 8BX; N Hagueu, Yorks S10 4FB; John Bray, Lancs BB9 7RP; Jason Smith, Bradford BD12 0EU; Nick Carter, Avon BS23 3RQ; Philip Green, Shropshire; Keith Roberts, Devon PL5 4ET; Andrew Robinson, Dorset BH7 6LW; Steven Martin, London N13 5DT; N Wales, Edinburgh EH4 3NH; B Graham, Sunderland SR5 1SE; Mark Balaam, Suffolk IP3 0LX; G Robinson, Lancs BB11 4DE; Marc Rickard, N.Yorks DL7 8HT; Matthew Hall, Kent ME16 9HH; David J Aston, Kent; Paul Hatwell, Middx HA3 7HE; Christopher Watkins, E.Sussex BN20 9QB; Colin Woodcock, Hants SO5 4PE.**

I WANT A COMPUTER DESK
Issue 53

The lucky winner of a fabbo computer desk from The Power House is . . . (cue fanfare) **Jason Mann** from somewhere in Herts. He also gets the same four games (*Powerama, Metropolis, TT Racing Simulator* and *Norman*) as the runners-up . . .
Simon (I win everything) Penfold, Gwent NP2 1GD; Barry Wood, Wirral L61 3SN; Colm Andrew, Cheshire; Keith Roberts, Devon PL5 4ET; Richard Dowson, Cleveland TS22 5LY; Barry Gorman, N.Ireland BT28 1SU; David Taylor, Mid Glamorgan CF32 7BL; D Orosun, Staffs ST1 3DD; R Stevens, Dyfed SA69 9JP; Jeremy Hyde, Northern Ireland BT62 3NF; Rick White, S.Yorks DN3 2LB; Paul Humphreys, Lancs BB3 3AJ; David Coverley, Cleveland TS11 6DG.

GO CRAZY WITH GREMLIN
Issue 53

They're a crazy lot at Gremlin (especially that Richard 'hard bargain' Barclay) and so are their games. In Issue 53's *Skate Crazy* competition they were giving away two pairs of booted roller skates and loads of T-shirts and caps. The two first prize winners are **Chris Sneath** from Staffs and **Mike** (snooker?) **Hallet** from Bristol. A crazy thirty runners-up get T-shirts and caps . . .
John Andrews, Nottingham NG16 6BE; Chris Burnell, S.Yorks S72 9AT; Richard Tanswell, Suffolk IP28 8NZ; Mark Nattrass, Cheshire CW6 0QF; Malcolm Sims, Kent CT1 1YF; Chris Evans, Wolverhampton WV11 3SU; Stephen Marshman Esq, Birmingham B45 8ES; Alan Gill, London N22 4RY; Paul Brown, Cardiff CF4 3EE; B Carlane, Essex SS3 9LG; A Steele, Bury BL9 6HT; Rory Dodds, Bucks HP8 4RD; Vinod Patel, Middx HA0 3DJ; Kerry Gray, Hants GU35 8SE; Kevin McCafferty, Londonderry BT47 2BY; Crash Reader, S.Yorks S74 9DR; Jon Rose, W.Sussex PO21 3TZ; Stephen Cann, Glos GL15 4SA; Craig Litchfield, Cardiff CF5 1LP; Warren Davies, Shropshire SY11 1EP; William Fisher, Glos GL7 6BE; David McLaughlin, Kent TN12 0EG; Paul Gray, Worcs B98 8PG; Mr Ben Wootton, Milton Keynes MK19 7AE; Ciaran Walsh, Eire; Paul Hatwell, Middx HA3 7HE; D Edwards, Hereford HR2 7XZ; Mr G N Hassall, Stoke-On-Trent ST7 4AX; Iain Rivers, Oxon OX15 4BD; James Harrison, Staffs DE12 6QA. And an even crazier fifty get a copy of the game, *Skate Crazy*.
Scott Mitchell, Gwent NP1 7PQ; Mr T Farrell, Devon PL1 5HQ; Simon Harrison, Manchester M22 7JE; S Tombouloglou, London N19 5DP; Wayne Watkins, Birmingham B37 5BW; Andrew Taylor, Scotland FK5 4UT; David Gill, Birmingham B11 1HA; Henry Chilcott, Surrey KT8 9EW; J Tomkinson, Birmingham B43 6PA; Ian Meadows, Essex RM11 2LA; Neil Ashmore, Cheshire SK12 7PU; Philip C Wynn, Beds MK45 4BE; David Richards, Worcs DY10 2UZ; J Hutchinson, Beds LU7 7LR; James Smith, Worcester; Patrick Llamas, Cleveland TS5 5DD; Kenan Acar, Scotland PA8 7HX; Simon Cornell, Birmingham B43 5BA; Stuart Reid, Staffs; David Robinson, Coventry CV3 6FZ; R A Davies, Glos GL51 7DJ; Steven Hoffman, Scotland DG2 9HT; Anthony Goddard, Oxford OX2 7TE; David Singer, Glos GL51 9LG; P W Foster, London SW14 8JJ; Jason Davies, Nottingham; Richard Moss, Essex CO3 5PL; R Stevens, Dyfed SA69 9JP; Colin MacDonald, Dundee DD5 4RZ; Lee Hawkins, Hants GU13 0JH; Anthony Gray, W.Sussex BN12 4TP; Daniel Marsh, Cheshire SK4 5EP; A Bird, Essex SS17 8AA; M Bell, Scotland PA8 7AS; Mr A Jackson, Norfolk NR30 1DW; Andy Dalli, London SW8 1QT; Daniel Cox, Walsall; Nigel Thomas, Birmingham B42 1QR; Ian Whiting, Worcester WR5 2BT; Crash Reader, W.Glamorgan; J Bragg, Essex IG1 1HQ; Nicholas Moore, W.Mids B92 8PF; K Chada, Leics LE12 8JP; F A Beale Esq, Dorset DT11 7RS; Neil Wearmouth, Co.Durham DL17 0AR; J R Lewis, Lincs PE11 3NZ; Mark Hartley, Notts; Thomas Fallesskov, Denmark; Craig Howard, Shropshire TF3 2EG; S Quick, Oxon OX16 9LF.

SECRET FORMULA
Issue 53

In won of our strangest comps yet you had the opportunity to win a case of Irn Bru (not for wimps, believe me!). The six well-hard winners just happen to be listed below . . . (Well there's a thing!)
Michael Brown, W.Yorks WF13 4LQ; Philip Corbett, Warks CV8 1DJ; Anthony Johnson, London NW2 5TA; Ben Tiley, Bristol BS16 5NE; Paul Fox, Cumbria CA7 0PQ; Garth Evans, Cardiff CF2 5LE.

All winners, please allow 28 days for the delivery of your prizes. All queries regarding competitions run in CRASH should be sent to **Frances Mable, CRASH, *PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB*.** Please don't ring Frances as she has enough trouble reading through all your entries as it is.

CHART VOTING FORMS

EACH MONTH WE PICK OUT FIVE WINNERS FOR EACH CHART. THE ONLY WAY TO WIN IS TO ENTER. THE IS YOUR CHANCE TO INFLUENCE THE CRASH CHARTS AND STAND A CHANCE OF WINNING £40 WORTH OF SOFTWARE. WE NEED YOUR VOTES.
VOTE NOW!

Cut out your voting forms and send them off to **CRASH VIDEO CHART, CRASH ADVENTURE CHART, CRASH HOTLINE CHART** and **CRASH STRATEGY CHART *PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB***

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4 ....
5 ....

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T-shirt size ☐

HOTLINE CHART

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4 ....
5 ....

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Address ....
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.... Postcode..........
T-shirt size ☐

ADVENTURE CHART

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T-shirt size ☐

STRATEGY CHART

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SOME-HAIR OVER THE RAINBOW . . .

. . . THERE'S A PC ENGINE FROM RAINBOW ARTS



CRASH COMPETITION

Who said computer games were just for boys? (Not *more* sexism, please – Ed.) Following phenomenal success on other formats, *The Great Giana Sisters* are all set to hit Spectrum screens with a vengeance. Little Giana from Milano (in Italy, for the uneducated and Nick Roberts) is caught up in a mysterious and magical dream. As she rubs the sleep from her cute little eyes, she finds herself caught in a cartoon world of traps, tricks and treacherous underground trails. To escape from this wondrous dreamscape, she and her sister Maria must leap, skip, hop and head butt (what else are spiky, punk hairstyles for?) their way to freedom.

What starts out as Giana's midnight nightmare turns into a mystical world, weird and wonderful beyond your wildest imaginings. And if your wildest dreams have always centred around the high resolution, colourful graphics, sampled sound and incomparable gameplay of an arcade quality machine, then dream no more – a PC Engine (see Issue 8 of THE GAMES MACHINE for an in-depth review) is within your grasp.

Rainbow Arts, in a fit of uncontrollable generosity, have agreed to give away the newest, neatest Japanese games console yet – even before it's available on the British market! At about 5½" square, it takes up hardly any space at all, weighs very little and plays tiny, credit card-sized games. In Japan, demand is already outstripping supply and the most influential British software companies are keeping a beady eye on its development.

If you want to be one of the first people in Britain to own one of these coveted machines and a couple of fabulous PC Engine games, shipped to our windy shores all the way from exotic Japan, get out your crayons and come up with a suitably whacky design for an appropriately punky Giana sister hairdo. Use your wildest imagination and strangest thoughts to create a style so crazy that it would blow any little girl's mind.

Stick your creation on a piece of paper, put it in an envelope, not forgetting to enclose your name and address of course, and give it to your nearest relation (sisters are preferred) to put in the nearest post box for delivery to **GIVE RAINBOW ARTS A HAIRDO COMP, CRASH, *PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB.***

Entries must be received by August 30. And don't forget, the decision of the all-knowing, all-powerful CRASH judges remains completely final and totally binding in every possible way.

ARE YOU HAVING PROBLEMS REACHING THE HIGH-SCORE TABLE? NEVER MIND, EVEN IF YOU CAN'T HIT THOSE MEGAMILLION SCORES ANY MORE YOU COULD STILL QUALIFY FOR PHIL KING'S

SCORES

SCORES has been taken over! Robin Candy fancied a change (of clothes) and now yours truly, Phil King, will judge those all-important scores on the very LATEST games.

Each month there's the top score (hopefully legitimate) received so far, plus a couple of others so you can measure yourself against fellow mere mortals as well as those gifted mega-scorers.

From all the entries – irrespective of whether they're printed or not – there are five winners picked at random. The first prize winner receives **£40** worth of software of their choice plus a CRASH cap and T-shirt, while four runners-up receive CRASH caps and T-shirts. So don't forget to tell us on the form what software and T-shirt you'd like – should you be one of the lucky few!

ARKANOID – REVENGE OF DOH	Imagine
Jamie Glover, Grimsby	1613870
Andrew Wilson, Romford	1381221
Neil Hopkinson, Fareham	936660

ATF	Digital Integration
Kathryn Waldock, Bishop Auckland	28720
Maurice Campbell, Hamilton	12060
Chris Whaley, Mitcham	8835

BUBBLE BOBBLE	Firebird
Paul Seamark, Longford	1695290
Michael Cass, Blackpool	956340
Chris Atwill, Barton	279800

COBRA	Ocean
Karoly Juhasz, Worcester	917750
Andrew Higgins, Sutton Coldfield	498110
Marvin Reynolds, Crewe	205000

CYBERNOID	Hewson
H Cummings, Solihull	230360
Liz Cann, Yorkley Slade	87950
Matthew Payne, Churchdown	78224

COMBAT SCHOOL	Ocean
Nicola Philip, Portessie Buckie	463250
Andrew Henrys, Willastow	95070
Paul Williams, Towcester	50160

DRILLER	Incentive
Robert Niesolowski, New Barnet	3205000
R Carradine, Halesowen West	1972380
Duncan McDermott, Allbrook	235700

ENDURO RACER	Activision
Garry Mills Jr, Sandhurst	6794810
Adam Leach, Woodford Green	2542458
Steven Anderson, Dublin	577158

EXOLON	Hewson
Lincoln Harvey, Hadleigh	8453390
Colin Irving, Georgetown	138950
Anthony Kirvell, Stanford-le-Hope	76500

FIREFLY	Ocean/Special FX
Adrian Shaw, Marlow	915940
Chris Smith, Tunstall	535850
Vic Langley, Berlant	502700

FLYING SHARK	Firebird
Steven Ball, Shepperton	894720
Richard Kennerley, Knutsford	186050
Owen King, Rhosneigr	178470

GRYZOR	Imagine
Adrian Philip Naller, Dorchester	357840
Leigh 'Turnip' Loveday, Aberafan	144800
Steven Bowman, Whitchurch	47800

IK+	System 3
Craig Brackenridge, Cumbernauld	452300
Mark Schofield, Holmfirth	164500
S Tiltman, Whatstandwell	74500

IKARI WARRIORS	Elite
David Bradford, Sutton-in-Ashfield	4403200
Gavin Gilhart, Royston	4368400
Kevin Walker, Dromara	1075300

KARNOV	Electric Dreams
Colin Ngan, Freemantle	437220
Steve Hendrick, Walton-le-Dale	413320
H Cummings, Solihull	365020

PLATOON	Ocean
Ken Bowes, Battersea	372294
Paul Sheehan, Alvaston	139100
David Hayles, Bury St Edmunds	61200

RAMPAGE	Activision
Ken Bowes, Battersea	691420
Graham Brown, Bowerham	160420
Richard Willis, Smethwick	130400

RENEGADE	Imagine
Stuart Ridge, Marazion	15273921
Leighton Jones, Brotton	4276650
Alan Anderson, Heswall	200190

STAR WARS	Domark
Julian Simpson, Hazlemere	295580031
Kevin Brown, Arbroath	1389573
Andrew Millinard, Markfield	170695

SUPER HANG-ON	Electric Dreams
Richard Feltbower, Stoke-on-Trent	60908324
Duncan McDermott, Allbrook	15455980
Matthew Kerry, Ducklington	241444

TARGET; RENEGADE	Imagine
Graham Phillips, Welwyn	1635500
Jamie Mash, Osmotherley	288300
Vanessa da Silva, Lisboa PORTUGAL	119400

THUNDERCATS	Elite
Richard Sanders, Clifton	572220
Andrew Partington, Bolton	478850
Paul Bloomer, Belfast	405600

ZYNAPS	Hewson
Owen Meadows, Raunds	632900
Paul Evison, Buxton	379850
Paul Whitham, Wakefield	256100

WINNERS

Forty pounds worth of software is already on its way to **H Cummings** of Solihull, who is this month's first prize winner. Mr C lists *Target; Renegade* and *Action Force 2* amongst his choice of software – I'm sure they'll keep him happy over the summer period. And, like the following four runners-up, he also receives a trendy CRASH cap and CRASH T-shirt. The fortunate foursome are **Ronnie Morrell** of Wrose Shipley in West Yorkshire; **David Bradford** from Sutton-in-Ashfield; **R Carradine** who hails from Halesowen and **Karl Smith** who comes from Kirkwall on Orkney.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT 2 … This month sees another cheat caught out with a ridiculously high *Driller* score. Yes, someone (who shall remain anonymous) from Bristol dared to enter a score of over 17 million(!) and, as stated a couple of issues back, it is impossible to get more than 3500000. But he is not alone in cheats' corner this month. Two hugely dubious *Cybernoid* scores were claimed by a Glaswegian and a Lancasterian; over three and four million respectively. Not to be outdone, an anonymous person from Skegness sent in an *Enduro Racer* score of over 94 million – you must be joking! If you do score an incredibly huge score please try and send in some sort of proof … ANNOUNCEMENT ENDS

Don't forget – any score sent in to **SCORES** can win you a prize, even if it's not printed – but avoid unwanted public exposure: don't cheat!

SEND ME YOUR SCORES

NAME .... **AGE**........

ADDRESS ....

....

.... **POSTCODE** ....

MY SCORES ARE:

GAME **SCORE**

1 ....

2 ....

3 ....

Send this form (or a copy) with your scores for up to three games to **PHIL KING'S SCORES, CRASH, *PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB***. ONLY GENUINE SCORES WILL BE ACCEPTED; any improbably huge scores will be immediately binned and the sender will be forced to eat ZZAP!'s Paul Glancey – a fate worse than sharing a desk with him.

IF I WIN TOP PRIZE I WOULD LIKE THIS £40 WORTH OF SOFTWARE: ....

....

AND IF I WIN ANY PRIZE I WOULD LIKE THIS CRASH T-SHIRT, CHOSEN FROM THOSE ADVERTISED IN THE CRASH HYPERMARKET: ....

The decision of the super-powerful CRASH judges is final in all respects. So don't even let the thought of a confrontation cross your mind – you don't stand a chance.

PREVIEW

Coming soon to a Spectrum near you!



▲ Gore galore in *R-Type*

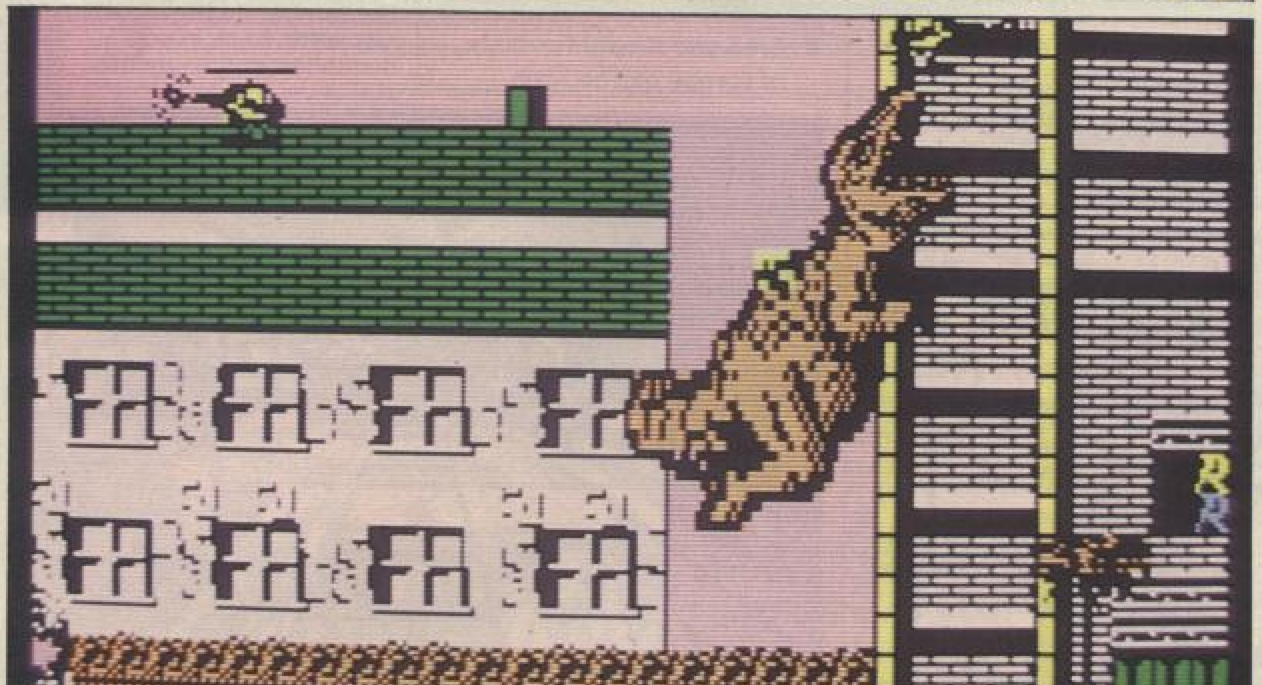
APPETISING APPOINTMENTS

Hooray! It's holiday time. While you're lying on sun-drenched beaches in Bognor, Brighton and Bahrain, licking a rapidly melting ice cream cone and sipping at a pistachio Slush Puppy, cast your mind forward into the mellow month of September and gently savour what lies in store . . .

MONSTER MUNCH

Prepare yourself for a monstrous oriental journey. **Gremlin**'s ***T-Wrecks*** (although the name may be changed) gives you a dinosaur's-eye view of the modern world. Insensitive explorers have unearthed a huge nest of giant eggs, and brought them back to Japan. Nettled at this flamboyant disregard for ecology, prehistory and motherhood, mamma monster goes on the rampage.

▼ Gremlin's monster gets ready to smash it up

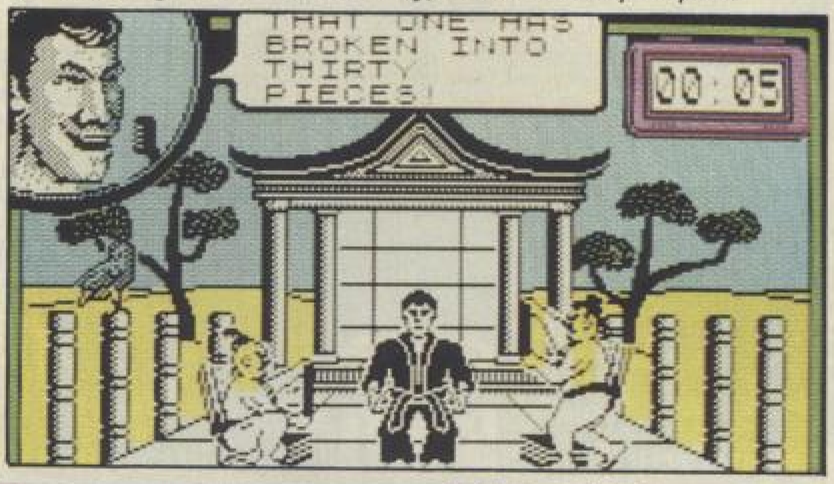


(Whoops, we weren't supposed to mention that word.) Chewing her way through cities and nuclear waste dumps she tries to locate as many of her eggs as possible, while laying several more. Japan's three resident monsters can't resist joining in all of the fun. Defeat them and at least some of your brood might sail to safety in the sunset.

Monsters have absolutely nothing to do with another imminent Gremlin release. ***Super Sports*** (originally called *Alternative Olympics*) takes you on a comprehensive sporting tour. Events are to include archery and swimming. But so far Gremlin are keeping pretty hush hush about it.

Hewson and Finnish programmer Charlie T are all set to take you to a dark, mysterious world beyond the Arctic Circle. Trapped in the ***Netherworld***, a winter land of cruel terrain where the forces of good and evil are locked in eternal combat, you have no choice but to bribe your way out. Diamonds are the price of freedom. Use your multi-firing gyrosphere to blast your way through armies of dragons, acid bubbles, fizzling fireballs and deadly monster generators.

▼ Savouring life (the oriental way) in Gremlin's *Super Sports*



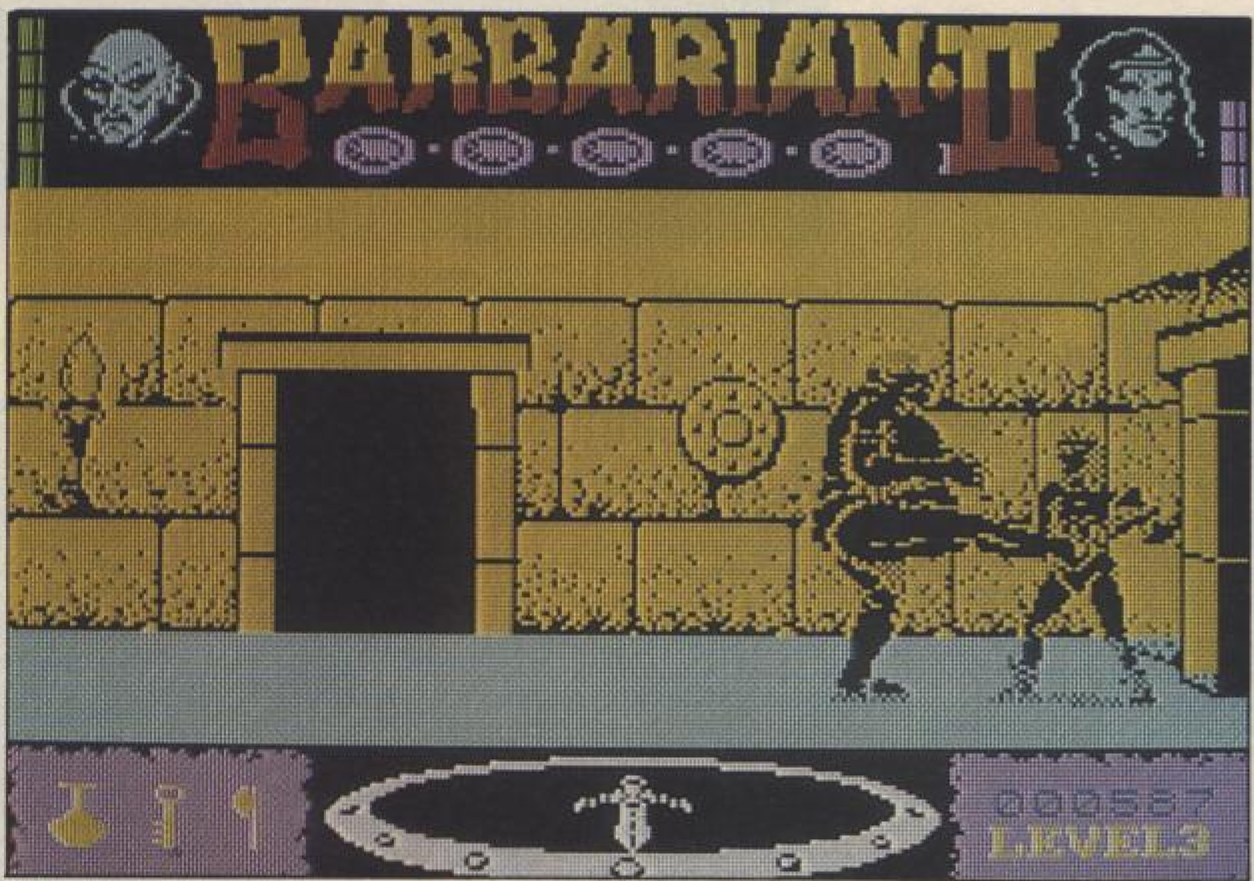
Monsters feature heavily in ***R-Type***, a shoot-'em-up from **Activision** set in a sinister anatomical environment. Organic backdrops, repulsively animated missiles, pulsating hearts and writhing snakes, culminating in an enormous alien spaceship, should make for heart-stopping arcade action. Wait and see. Or, if you've seen the popular arcade game, just wait!

Following their success with *Bionic Commando* (92%, Issue 53), Capcom are ready to release ***1943***. The sequel (surprise, surprise) to Capcom's addictive arcade game *1942*, is set in the Battle of Midway which was fought at the height of World War II. It gives you the chance to take control of a magnificent P38 fighter, armed with six secret weapons, and relive one of the most significant encounters of the war. Get your flying jackets and goggles ready for further developments. Other Capcom releases include ***Black Tiger*** (see last month's previews), ***Tiger Road*** and ***LED Storm***. More news soon . . .

HAIRY ARMS

Latest information from **Psygnosis**, indicates that ***Terrorpods*** is due for imminent release. Set on the grey and hostile planet Colian, it has you attempting to counter the nocturnal Terrorpods from the comparative safety of a DSV (Defence Strategy Vehicle). Sounds hair-raising . . .

And it's hair that's bristling all over the sturdy arms of two burly individuals about to star in a couple of savage arcade adventures. Psygnosis' ***Barbarian*** (not to be confused with that other *Barbarian* from Palace) should be out soon. Hideous perils await the traveller who undertakes the daring quest to destroy the lair of the accursed Necron and win the kingdom's crown. ▶



▲ Muscle-man is back - this time with Mariana at his side

There's more hack and slay scheduled for early August when that other Barbarian (from Palace) makes his comeback. The first *Barbarian* was reviewed way back in Issue 41 (85%). He's out to do battle with the evil wizard Drax again but this time he is joined by an emancipated, sword-wielding Princess Mariana (alias Maria Whittaker). The sequel recreates all the gory, grim and grisly animation of the original but this time there's a mappable, multi-level playing area which adds an element of exploration to all that bloody decapitation. Yum . . .

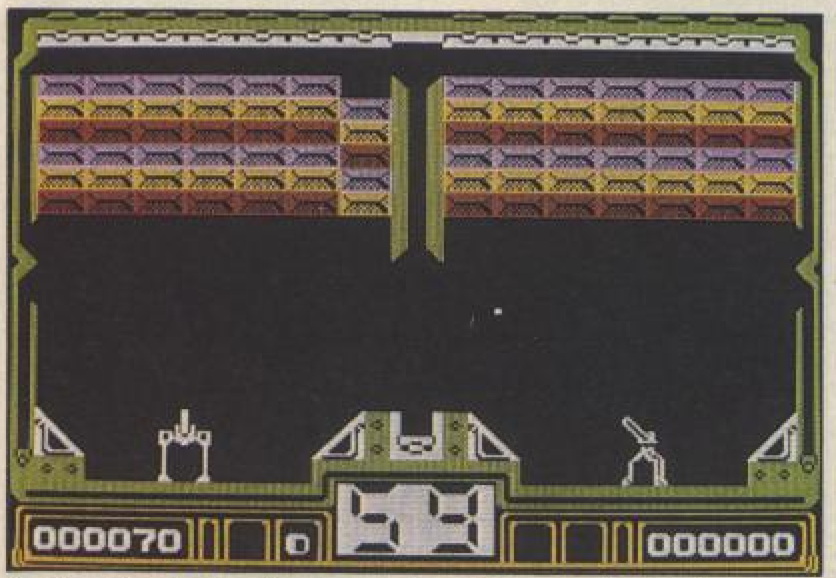
TRAIN SPOTTER'S DELIGHT

The Train: Escape to Normandy chugged to success in ZZAP! (87%, Issue 36) when it was released for the Commodore earlier this year. From August **Accolade**'s successful train-driving simulation, set in France in the year 1944, should be available for the Spectrum. You play them role of a French Resistance leader, Pierre Le Feu, charged with the daunting task of seizing an armoured train (loaded with France's most precious art treasures) and steering it to safety through enemy lines. In addition to normal engineering duties (difficult enough at the best of times) you're forced to cope with enemy ambushes, traps and airborne attacks. Let's hope that all the complex features of the original survive the conversion.

Finally, this month, there's news of a *Breakout* game with a difference. **Addictive Games**' ***Hotshot*** is a variation on the familiar game of squash. The competitors are a couple of droids and instead of racquets they play with gravitation guns – long snout-like projections attacked to their heads. Sucking up and releasing the ball they attempt to break down a wall of bricks and make it through the trials and tribulations of a pinball style level. Black holes and rising water make this elaborate process all the more difficult.

You may have noticed a distinct lack of games this month. This is partly due to the annual summer software slump but also because of the impending PC Show (from September 16 at Earl's Court). So don't miss the next issue of CRASH which will contain an information packed rundown on the show's activities plus features on all the top stands. The FREE PC Show Supplement is exclusive to readers of CRASH, ZZAP! 64 and THE GAMES MACHINE, so don't miss out, reserve your copy NOW!

Fortunately you won't be required to take part in all this excitement till early September. In the meantime, just settle back in your deckchair and enjoy the sun . . .



▲ Breaking the *Breakout* mould in *Hot Shot*



▼ Everyone aboard for a tour of Europe on *The Train*

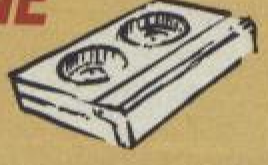




GOGGLE!

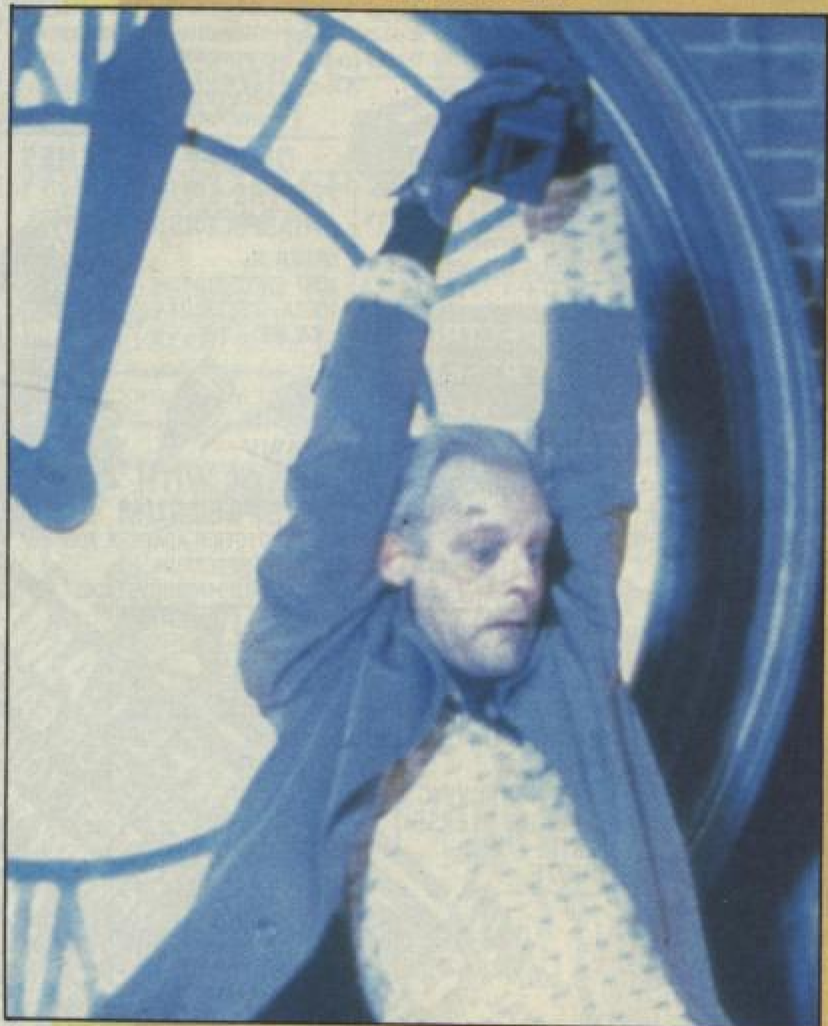
TIME TO GET A MOVIE

DOMINIC HANDY on video

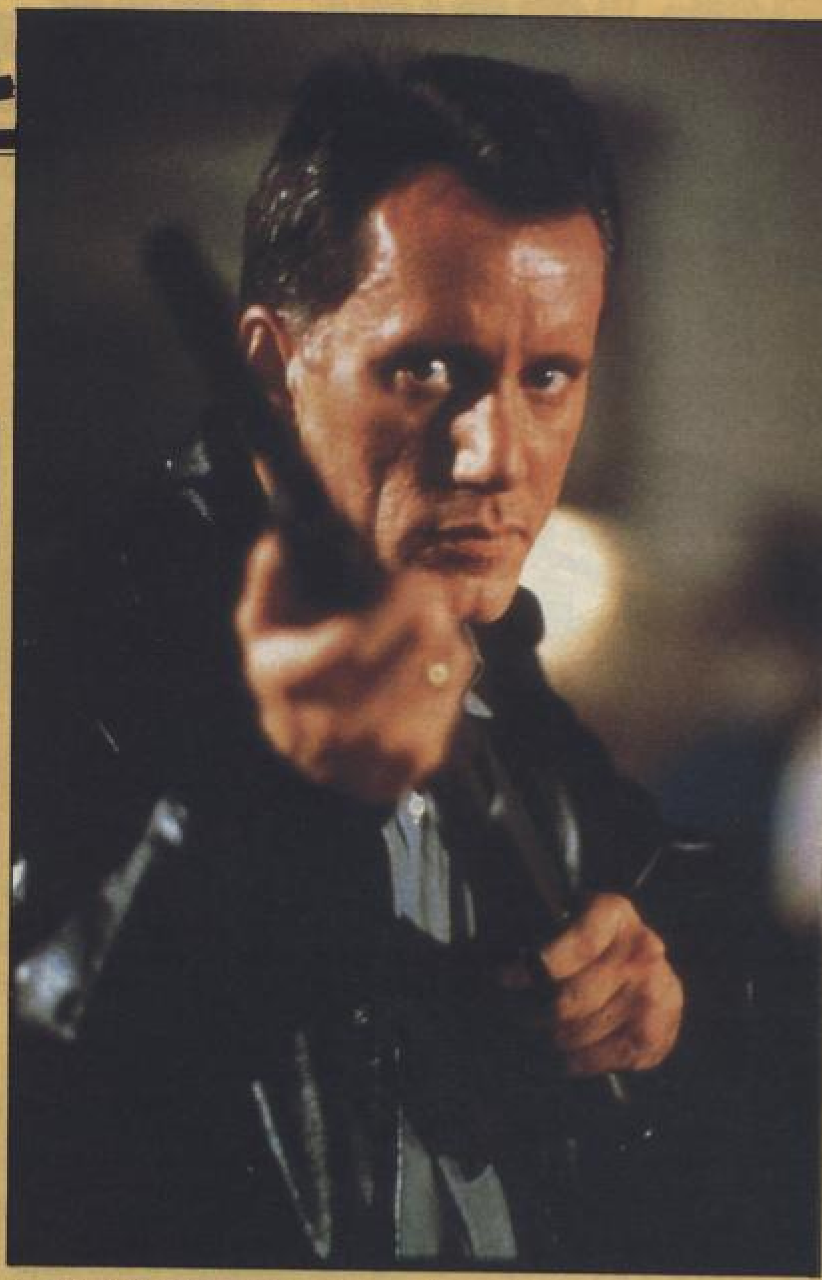


WHAT, a crazy old world the video business is. Even if you can't find something of interest on the rental shelves there's always the sell-through market to go for. With fabulous films being released all the time at a budget price there's never been a better time to own a video. All tastes are catered for: from the wild antics of the ***St Trinian's Collection*** (at £9.99 each from Warner) and ***Woody Woodpecker And His Friends – Vol III*** (£9.99, CIC) to the more sedate actions of ***The Cliff Richard Collection*** (£9.99 each, Warner) and ***Knight Rider 2: Night Of The Juggernaut*** (£9.99, CIC). In fact July looks like being a very exciting month on the growing sell-through shelves of the chain stores.

The biggest budget release of the year so far must go to CIC Video. The end of July sees their release of the film that literally *made* **Michael J Fox** an internationally renowned superstar. Yes, ***Back To The Future*** (£9.99, CIC) is finally available to add to your video collection. In 1987 – it was released in November 86 – *Back To The Future* pulled in many awards, including the year's Most Rented Video Award from the British Video Association. Fox also picked up an award as the most popular actor. For those unfortunate few that haven't seen it, Fox plays a high school student, Marty McFly. After many hours inventing, Marty's mad scientist friend (**Christopher Lloyd** – *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, TV's *Taxi*) finally creates a time transfer machine, and due to a freak accident Marty gets transported back in time. As well as finding the (now much younger) scientist to help him get back, Marty must stop his mother falling in love with the wrong person. This isn't helped by her infatuation with him, and a school bully, named Biff, who keeps beating up his father-to-be. If they don't fall in love Marty's future will be wrecked – he will not exist! *Back To The Future* also features some great music from Eric Clapton and Huey Lewis And The News.



▼ *Back To The Future* – **now available for £9.99**



▲ **James Woods: mean, moody and magnificent**

Molly Ringwald, star of *Pretty In Pink*, co-stars with **Robert Downey** in CBS/Fox's July release, ***The Pick Up Artist*** (15). Downey plays Jack Jericho, master of the chat-up line, who meets his match when he encounters Randy (Ringwald). After a brief and dispassionate encounter Randy refuses to give Jack her phone number. So Jack must use all he knows to try and pick up his greatest encounter.

Molly Ringwald first hit the limelight in the **John Hughes**-written *Pretty In Pink*, Hughes (who practically created the brat-pack) directs CIC's August 5 release ***Some Kind Of Wonderful*** (15). He again teams up with Howard Deutch (director of *Pretty In Pink*) to produce another romance-cum-comedy on contemporary youth. In the last year of high school, Keith (**Eric Stoltz** – *Mask*) likes nothing more than to create the odd artistic painting and work part-time in the local garage. But when he meets Amanda Jones (**Lea Thompson** – *Space Camp*, *Back To The Future*) his interests soon change. Although she's not that easy to get; as Keith's best friend Watts (a very independent young lady) soon points out, 'You can't tell a book by its cover . . . But you can tell how much it's gonna cost'.

August 18 sees the release of ***The Boy Would Could Fly*** (CBS/Fox, U), written and directed by Nick Castle. A sensitive girl (who yet again goes to high school – I wonder if they all go to the same one?) becomes interested in the boy next door, who says very little, but believes he can fly. Whilst trying to come to terms with him she gets involved in a world of fantasy and intrigue. Good performances all round keep a warm and well-intentioned plot plodding along at a bearable pace.

Just released from Warner is the much-talked about ***Masters Of The Universe*** (PG), with the muscular hulk of **Dolph Lundgren** (*Rocky IV*) in the main role of He-Man. In the movie of the popular Mattel toy line He-Man again comes up against his old pal Skeletor (**Frank Langella**). This time skull face has found an evil accomplish appropriately called Evil-Lyn, played by the beautiful **Meg Foster** (*The Emerald Forest*). Together they have taken hold the Sorceress of Greyskull Castle and encased her in an energy shield. Yet again He-Man must save the universe and banish the evil Skeletor into oblivion (or something like that). Look out for some fantastic visual effects from the master himself, **Richard Edlund** (*Star Wars Trilogy, Poltergeist I* and *II, Raiders Of The Lost Ark, 2010* and *Fright Night*).

Warner's main mid-August release must be **Norman Mailer**'s adaptation of his Pulitzer prize-winning book ***Tough Guys Don't Dance*** (18). Ready for this? One fine sunny morning Tim Madden (O'Neal) wakes up to find blood in his car, and the hidden severed head of a beautiful woman. (Wow, it must have been one helluva night!) Madden is now taken back into his dark and mysterious past, where he learns of his homicidal tendancies. Thrilling, but gruesome.

One of my favourite actors of the moment has got to be the terrific **James Woods** (*Salvador, Against All Odds, Best Seller*). After a very short cinema release Entertainment In Video have picked up the rights to release Woods's latest thriller ***Cop*** (18). Woods play a *Dirty Harry*-like detective sergeant in the Los Angeles police department. When Woods is first on the scene of a horrific murder he immediately bends the rules to get himself assigned to the investigation. As the case continues it soon becomes evident that the sex-related murder is one of many from a serial killer. However Woods's 'direct' approach is frowned upon by his born-again chief, and after many arguments he is suspended from the force. Woods's wife is also confused; she is certain her husband needs psychiatric help, and takes their child and leaves for San Francisco. With his personal and professional life in conflict, Woods becomes obsessed with the killer – but at what cost?

Only one person could play a retired secret agent-cum-restauranteur, and that person is **Bill Cosby**. In ***Leonard Part 6*** (RCA/Columbia, PG) Cosby plays a ex-spy who his persuaded by the goverment to take on and try to crack a case involving the takeover of the world by animals – frogs, lobsters, ostriches etc. They are all under the control of the wicked Medusa Johnson who plans to use the animals to manipulate the world. *Leonard Part 6* may be the longest running Pepsi Cola ad you've ever seen (just watch it, you'll see what I mean) but with Cosby's own brand of humour it'll keep, albeit very young, viewers engrossed for the 82 minutes.

And finally this month we come to, what I think is, the most underrated film of the year – ***Hollywood Shuffle*** (Virgin, 15). **Robert Townsend** (who directed Eddie Murphy in *Raw*) not only writes, produces and directs, he also finds time to star in this exposé of Hollywood's insistance on casting blacks as either pimps, butlers or Eddie Murphy-types (Townsend's impersonation of his close friend Murphy is hilarious). It tells the story of an ambitious young black actor (Townsend) trying to make it big in the movies, but without selling out to his 'brothers'. The film is just packed with superb interludes in which Townsend, among other things, dreams of being in a Black Actor School and taking the part of a film critic (absolutely side-splitting). If Townsend can create such an entertaining masterpiece on such a small budget, then I can't even think what he could do with the astronomical amounts they're paying out for films like *Rambo III*! Don't miss ***Hollywood Shuffle***, it's THE comedy of the month!



▲ *Hollywood Shuffle*: the comedy of the month

BACK in Issue 51 we looked at a new paper for the younger mid-teenage, aspiring yuppie called *Early Times*. This month we take a look at another children's paper to appear on the newstand. At 30p ***Scoop*** is very much like a *Look-In* in tabloid form. It contains a fair mix of light news, sport, music, and fashion. There's also a happy splattering of competitions and weird and wonderful facts that would only feel at home in a paper of this sort. The music section is very comprehensive, featuring reviews, gossip, charts and pin-up of all your favourite stars. In fact *Scoop* covers practically every subject of interest to the 9-13 age group (there's even room for titbits on the TV celebs). Keep your eye out for it.

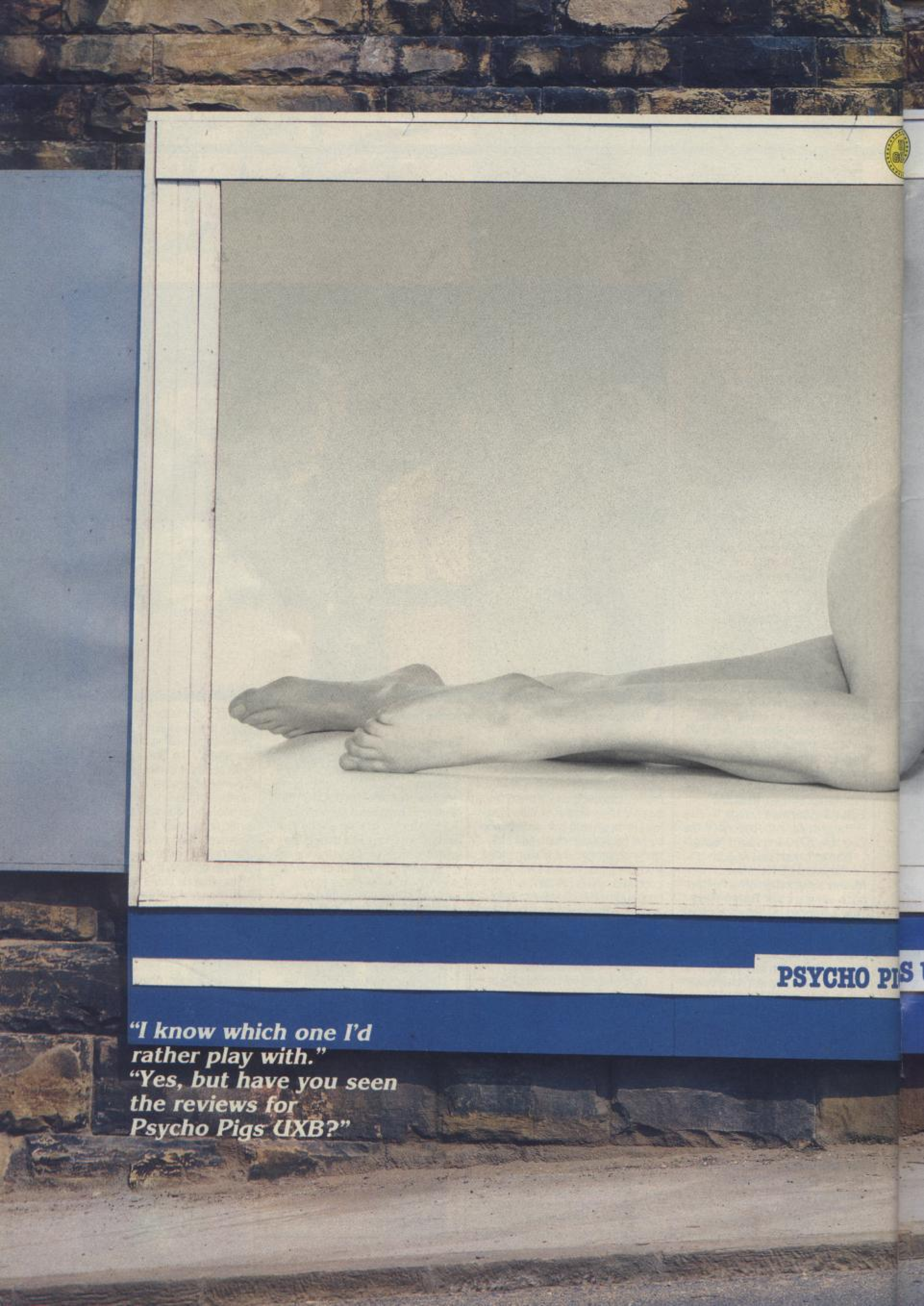

SCOOP

NEWS ROUNDUP

TV TROUBLE!

CARTOONS & PUZZLES

FILM and TV PICK



"I know which one I'd rather play with."
"Yes, but have you seen the reviews for Psycho Pigs UXB?"


PIGS UXB



ALIEN SYNDROME
SEGA®
C+VG HIT!
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ACE
Spectrum
Atari ST
Commodore 64
Atari ST
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DISK: Spectrum +3/Amstrad £14.99; C64 £11.99; Atari ST/Amiga £19.99
"If Ace can maintain this standard in their conversions then gamers are in for a treat. Ace game." – C&VG
"The arcade version of Alien Syndrome is simply brilliant and this conversion manages to capture all the original atmosphere and spirit." – ZZAP SIZZLER!
ACE: The new name for the best in coin-ops!
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